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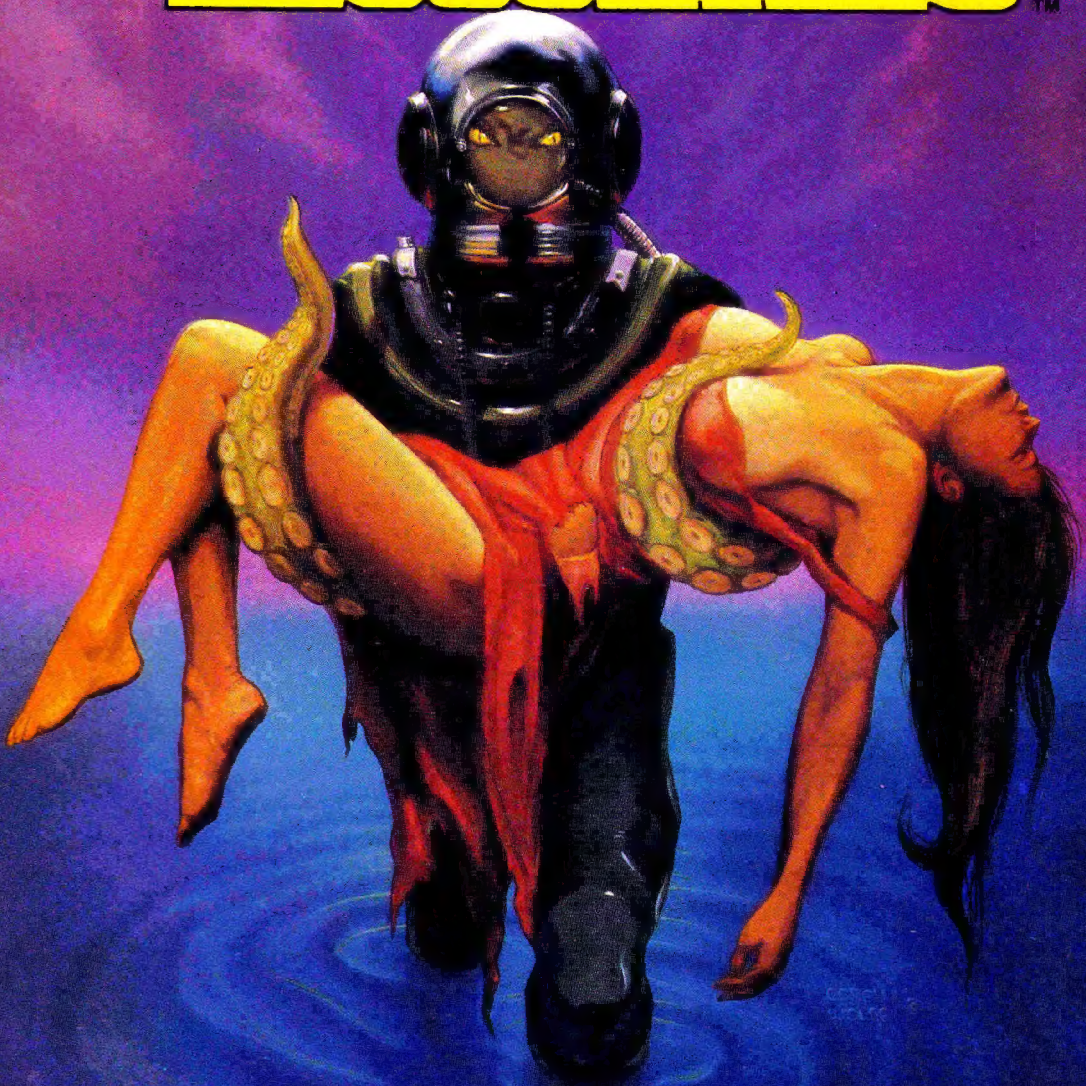
ALIEN ENCOUNTERS™



The PENUMBRA

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ON THE RACKS

SCOUT no. 8
Scout fights the final monster, and a mysterious messiah appears!

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS no. 7
Two stories by Bruce Jones, with Bo Hampton & Chuek Beckum art.

KITZ 'N' KATZ no. 3
The katz go on a crazy trip to Bigtown! Plus, the threat of Robokat!

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The first two bi-weekly issues are on sale this month. Only 50 cents! Meet new heroes and the great beginning of a new universe!

JOHNNY HAZARD no. 7 and 8
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MIRACLEMAN no. 8
With a new framing sequence, 2 stories from Miracleman's "past." Plus, The New Wave preview!

NEW DNAgents no. 9
The startling conclusion to the tale of Venimus!

DEAD REDS: As i sit down to write, news has come of a nuclear power "accident" in Russia, with the dead numbered at either two (what the soviets are saying) or in the thousands (reports gathered from ham radio operators in the area). Radioactive waste is spewing into our atmosphere, 49,000 human beings in the immediate vicinity were not evacuated until they'd been exposed to hazardous levels of radioactivity for 36 hours due to soviet government foul-ups, all the animals within an 18 mile radius of the plant were destroyed because they were "contaminated," warnings have been issued in some Eastern European countries that rainwater and milk are unfit to drink and that people should avoid conceiving children until radiation levels drop, a group of American bone marrow transplant experts have been flown to Russia to try to save the "operable cases" of radiation contamination, the town of Pripyat (25,000 inhabitants) is abandoned, the Pripyat River is in danger of contaminating the Dnieper River and thence the water supply of Kiev, and on page four of my daily newspaper, a long article by American nuclear power "experts" tells me that not only are we all perfectly safe, but "it couldn't happen here."

I despise liars.

Meanwhile, not a single comic book company is taking out ads to eulogize dead Russians the way they did for the dead Challenger space shuttle crew. Maybe 'cause they're reds and this is a cold war, or maybe 'cause we like our dead heroes to be killed quickly, cleanly and in a blaze of glory — but for whatever reason, nobody is out there shedding tears for the firefighters who tried to contain the nuclear plant inferno ("30 meter high flames," according to the soviet news agency, Tass) while they sank into liquifying asphalt.

Does it matter that they were commies? Does it matter that they were victims of the most massive totalitarian slave-state the world has ever known? Does it matter that they probably believed that Science — that unholy god — was on their side?

I've got news for you, folks: Science isn't on ***anybody's*** side. Science is just the most workable way to learn about that thing us aging hipsters laughingly call "reality." The Laws of Science bind us to themselves, and we can never escape. Among the Laws are these: Hydrogen is quite explosive . . . and nuclear radiation is deadly. Hydrogen can be harnessed, through containment, but accidents will happen and people can die if they're involved in a hydrogen explosion. Nuclear radiation can be harnessed through containment too, but accidents will happen, and people can die if they're involved in a nuclear explosion, plant meltdown, radiation link, or contamination by fallout.

Consider the odds . . . i don't know about you, but i'd feel safer aboard a space shuttle right now than downwind from Chernobyl. Nuclear power will NEVER be safe. It's too bad so many reds had to die to prove that simple scientific law.

catherine yronwode

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS™ no. 7, June 1986. Published by Eclipse Comics, P.O. Box 199, Guerneville, CA 95446. Catherine Yronwode, Editor. Sean Deming, Associate Editor. Dean Mullaney, Publisher. Cover art ©1986 Corey Wolfe. "Picture You and Me": story ©1986 Bruce Jones. Art ©1986 Chuck Beckum. "Under Tartuka": story ©1986 Bruce Jones. Art ©1986 Bo Hampton. "It Happened This Morning": story and art ©1986 Rick Geary. "So You Want To Be in Pictures": story ©1986 Douglas M. Wheeler. Art ©1986 Richard Howell. All other material ©1986 Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved. The stories, characters and events in this magazine are fictional. Film by SM Graphics. Printed in Canada.

TARTUKA STOOD AS IT HAD ALWAYS STOOD, HIGH, IMPASSIVE, BLACK AND UNHEEDING,,,
IT HAD STOOD THAT WAY FOR A MILLION CENTURIES AND MIGHT STAND FOR A MILLION MORE.

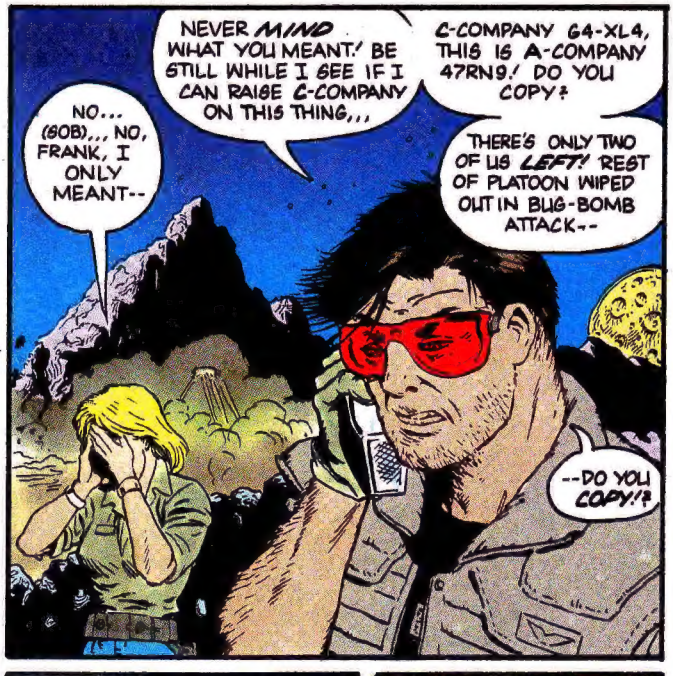
UNDER TARTUKA

UNDER ITS CRAGGY, EBON PEAKS IT HAD WITNESSED THE CRIMSON TURMOIL OF FOUR THOUSAND SEPARATE CONFLICTS, FOUGHT OVER A SCORE OF WAR-WEARY GENERATIONS.
SOMETIMES THE DUST AND SMOKE AND GREEN PALL OF RADIATION ROSE SO HIGH IT THREATENED TO ECLIPSE EVEN THE LOFTY SUMMITS OF TARTUKA'S HIGHEST REACHES.
YET, STILL, AFTER SO MANY UNVICTORIOUS YEARS, THE BATTLES RAGED ON.
STILL THEY RAGED ON,,,
C'MON, C'MON!... BRING UP THOSE SUPPLIES, CORPORAL!
WE GOTTA GET UNDER COVER BEFORE NIGHTFALL. YA WANNA GET US KILLED!?
I'M :(GASP): ,,,I'M COMING, FRANK!
I'M COMING AS :(GASP): FAST AS I CAN!
- CAN'T :(GASP): -- CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER, FRANK! HELP ME, PLEASE!
ALL RIGHT,,, OKAY, THIS PLACE IS AS GOOD AS ANY TO MAKE CAMP.
PRETTY FAIR ROCK COVERAGE,,, GET A FIRE STARTED AND I'LL TRY TO TRACE OUR LOCATION.
,,,YES :(GASP): JUST LET ME GET MY :(GASP): BREATH,,,
HUNGRY,,, STARVING.

Script: Bruce Jones Art: Bo Hampton Lettering: Tracy Hampton

WE HAVE TO CONSERVE FOOD! BLAST THIS HAND COMPASS,,,
WHAT WE NEED IS A FIELD SPECTOMETER SO WE COULD SEE THE ENTIRE AREA,,,
HEY, OFF YOUR BUTT, CORPORAL! MOVE!!
YA WANNA DIE OUT HERE IN THE DARK?
,,,NO, FRANK,,, I-I'M MOVING ,,,SEE, I'M DOING IT,,,
FRANK! EEEEE!!!
DUCK! BUG-BOMB!
GOT IT!!
IF YOU'D HAD THE BLASTED FIRE GOING WE COULDA SEEN IT COMIN' EARLIER! WORTHLESS DAMN FEMALE SOLDIERS!
I-I'M SORRY, FRANK-- IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN!
LOOK AT HER, CORPORAL-- OLD TARTUKA! WHAT A SIGHT!
SOMEDAY I'LL HAVE A HOUSE UP THERE, JENNY, WITH A VIEW OF THE MOUNTAINS AND A BRAND NEW PORSCHE G-74 IN THE GARAGE!
SOMEDAY WHEN THIS CRUMMY WAR IS OVER!,,,
YESSIR,,, A MOUNTAIN VIEW AND A BRAND NEW CAR!
A-AND A WIFE, FRANK? AND A CHILD PERHAPS?,,,
HUH? OH, YEAH ... A WIFE MAYBE, TOO... I AIN'T SO SURE ABOUT A CHILD,,, I AIN'T GOT TIME IN MY LIFE FOR KIDS ...TOO MUCH WORRY...
IF THOSE BASTARD GEMLINS WOULD EVER GIVE UP AND GO HOME, I COULD HAVE THAT HOUSE RIGHT NOW!
THEY KNOW THEY'RE BEATEN, WHY DON'T THEY JUST LEAVE?
THEY'VE FOUGHT AS LONG AS WE HAVE ,,, FOR CENTURIES ...
MAYBE THEY FEEL THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO OUR PLANET BY NOW,,,

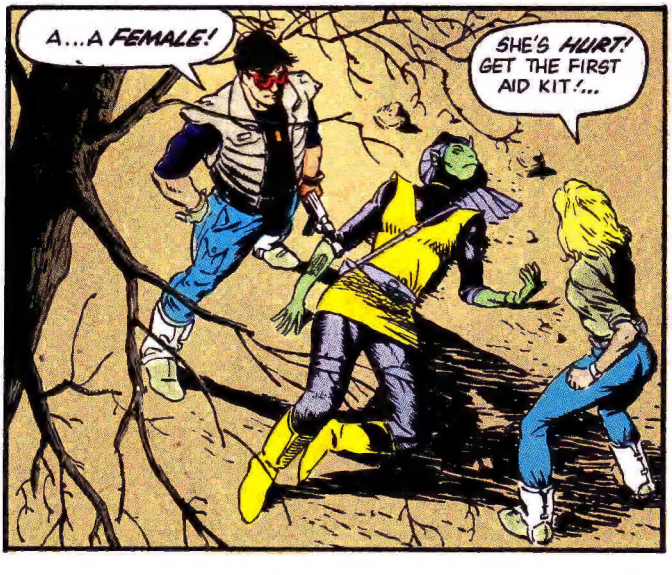
WHAT THE HELL'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? YOU SOUND LIKE A DAMN TRAITOR! WE WERE ON EARTH FIRST! THEY STARTED THE WAR!
YOU WANT YER KIDS GOIN' TO SCHOOL WITH THOSE DAMN LIZARDS? YOU WANT EARTH PEOPLE BREEDIN' WITH THEM HORRORS?
UH!


NEVER MIND WHAT YOU MEANT! BE STILL WHILE I SEE IF I CAN RAISE C-COMPANY ON THIS THING...
C-COMPANY G4-XL4, THIS IS A-COMPANY 47RN9! DO YOU COPY?
NO... (SOB)... NO, FRANK, I ONLY MEANT--
THERE'S ONLY TWO OF US LEFT! REST OF PLATOON WIPED OUT IN BUG-BOMB ATTACK--
--DO YOU COPY!?

SPARROWW!!
FUNNY... THE RELIEF PLATOON SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE DAYS AGO! WHERE THE HELL ARE THEY?
MAYBE THEY---
FRANK!!

THERE HE GOES! JENNY, GET DOWN!!

GOT 'IM! YA-HOO!
ZZRACK!!


A...A FEMALE!
SHE'S HURT! GET THE FIRST AID KIT!...

DAMN GEMLINS! I OUGHTA ZAP HER AGAIN...
NO, FRANK, THE GENEVA CODE!
THE HELL WITH THE CODE, WE SHOULD--
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! THIS IS OUR BIG CHANCE!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HER, SHE'S BLEEDING!?
JUST EXTRACTING SOME OF THAT NICE GREEN BLOOD, JENNY BABY.!
AND AFTER THAT I'M GONNA MIX IT WITH THE R-29 FACTOR!
FRANK, NO!
WE GOT US A LIVE SPECIMEN AT LAST, CORPORAL, AND WE'RE GONNA USE HER TO SEE WHAT'S GOIN' ON ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LINES!
FRANK, IT'S ONLY A THEORY! NOBODY'S EVER REALLY USED THE R-FACTOR BEFORE.
FRANK,,, I'M SCARED!
I SEEN IT DONE ONCE AT PRINCETON TEN YEARS AGO.! IT WORKS ALL RIGHT! AND WE'LL BE THE FIRST TO USE IT IN COMBAT!
FRANK, PLEASE! IT'S PAINFUL! I'VE HEARD IT'S VERY PAINFUL!
WE'LL BE FAMOUS, JENNY GIRL!
FRANK, DON'T,,, I'M EXHAUSTED ,,, I NEED FOOD!
MINUTES LATER,,,
HERE'S HER LASER PISTOL.! TAKE THE NORTH QUADRANT BACK THE SAME WAY SHE CAME, YOU SHOULD FIND THE ENEMY CAMP.!
FRANK, NO!
I'LL COVER YOU FROM HERE WITH THE RIFLE IF YOU NEED IT.! DON'T SWEAT THE LANGUAGE: WHEN THE DRUG TAKES EFFECT YOU'LL SPEAK PERFECT GEMLINIA!
KEEP LOW UNTIL YOU START TO CHANGE.! GET GOIN'!
MOVE, CORPORAL.! NOW!!
FIND OUT ALL YOU CAN ABOUT TROOP MOVEMENTS IN THE AREA.! TRY TO GET BACK LATER TONIGHT IF YOU CAN.!...
DON'T WORRY, I'VE GOT THE ANTIDOTE RIGHT HERE.!
OH, GOD, FRANK ,,, I'M SO SCARED!
CAN'T SEE A THING IN THIS SMOKE.! AM I OVER THE ENEMY LINES?
WILL THEY REALLY BELIEVE I'M A GEMLIN?
WHEN WILL THE DRUG TAKE EFFECT? WILL IT BE PAINFUL?
AAAGGHH!! OH, GOD! IT'S STARTING!

THE PAIN!
DEAR GOD, THE PAIN!
WHO GOES THERE! NAME AND RANK, SOLDIER!
OH, GOD, ULMA! IS THAT YOU?
ULMA, DARLING! I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!
MPH!
. . . I BEGGED YOU NOT TO GO SCOUTING ALONE BUT YOU'RE ALL RIGHT AT LEAST!
I HAVE BAD NEWS, DARLING, THE OTHERS ARE ALL DEAD!...
WE'RE THE LAST, ULMA,,, THE VERY LAST!
SIT DOWN, DARLING, AND REST. I'LL FIX YOU SOMETHING TO EAT, I SAVED MY RATIONS, THE LAST OF THEM, I'M AFRAID,,,
MORE BAD NEWS, I FIXED THE RADIO --ULMA, I CAN'T RAISE ANYONE NOT A LIVING SOUL!
DO YOU SEE WHAT THAT MEANS, DARLING? THE PLANET IS DEAD! EMPTY!
EMPTY?
ULMA, THE WAR IS OVER! OUR PLANET IS SO BOMBED OUT THE INVADERS DIDN'T WANT IT ANYMORE!
THEY'VE ALL GONE BACK TO EARTH. I PICKED UP THEIR VANISHING ROCKET SIGNALS!
I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- THIS,,, THIS IS EARTH!,,,ISN'T IT?
WHAT?? POOR DARLING, YOU'RE DELIRIOUS!
THIS IS ALTAIRA, DEAREST. THE EARTHLINGS WERE THE AGRESSORS, REMEMBER?

...AND NOW, AFTER CENTURIES OF USELESS FIGHTING, IT'S OVER... AND NEITHER SIDE WON ANYTHING...
WE'RE ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THE RACE, ULMA, WE'RE ALL ALONE--EXCEPT FOR THAT SMALL ENEMY PLATOON ACROSS THE RIDGE THAT GOT LEFT BEHIND WHEN THE ROCKETS TOOK OFF...
DID YOU GET A LOOK AT THEM, DARLING?
...NO...I... LHAN, ARE YOU SURE THE WAR IS OVER?
...ARE YOU POSITIVE?

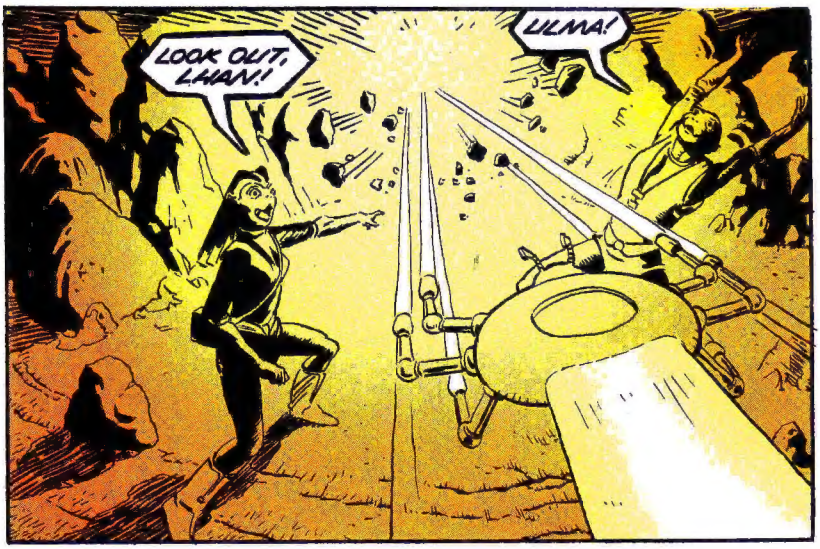
I'M SURE. THE RADIO DOESN'T LIE. BUT DON'T WORRY, SWEETHEART, I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU! WE'LL STILL BUILD THAT LITTLE HOUSE YOU WANTED UP THERE ON MT. TARTUKA! REMEMBER? THE ONE WITH THE LITTLE STONE PATH AND THE LITTLE WHITE FENCE...
...AND THE NURSERY?
THE NURSERY...?

IT MIGHT TAKE TIME, BUT WE'LL KEEP THE RACE GOING, I PROMISE YOU!...
WHY THE SAD FACE, DARLING? HAVE YOU FALLEN OUT OF LOVE WITH ME SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE?
HA-HA!

I-I'VE GOT TO GO! I'VE GOT TO GO BACK -- BACK TO THE ENEMY CAMP...
I-I LEFT SOMETHING THERE!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT DARLING? YOU CAN'T GO BACK THERE NOW!

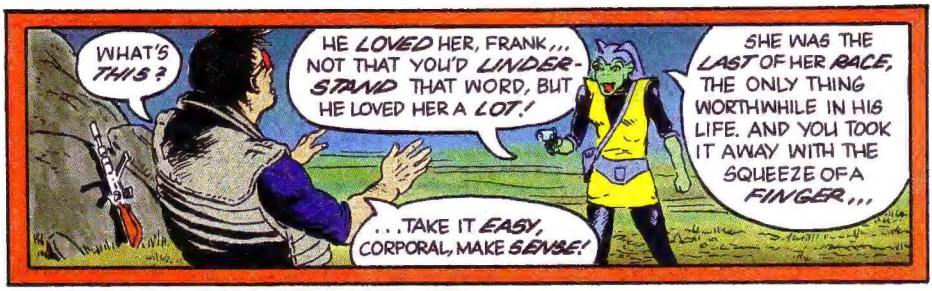
BESIDES, I'LL NEVER LET YOU RISK YOUR LIFE LIKE THAT AGAIN. I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU! ULMA, YOU'RE MY WHOLE LIFE, DON'T YOU KNOW THAT?
--Y-YES, BUT WHAT IF--WHAT IF I WAS... CHANGED SOMEHOW... WHAT IF I WASN'T THE SAME ULMA YOU KNEW...ON THE INSIDE...I MEAN?

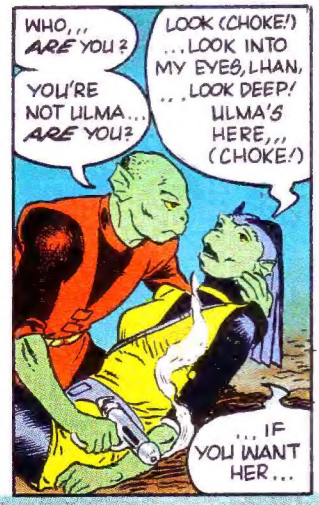
BUT YOU ARE THE SAME ON THE INSIDE, I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES! AND YOUR EYES HAVE NEVER LIED TO ME, ULMA DEAR. YOU DO LOVE ME.
DON'T YOU, DARLING?
I... I...


LOOK OUT, LHAN!
ULMA!

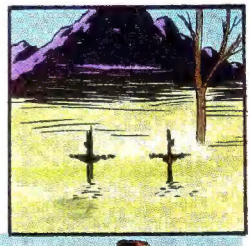
ULMA! ULMA! WHERE ARE YOU? DARLING, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? ULMA!

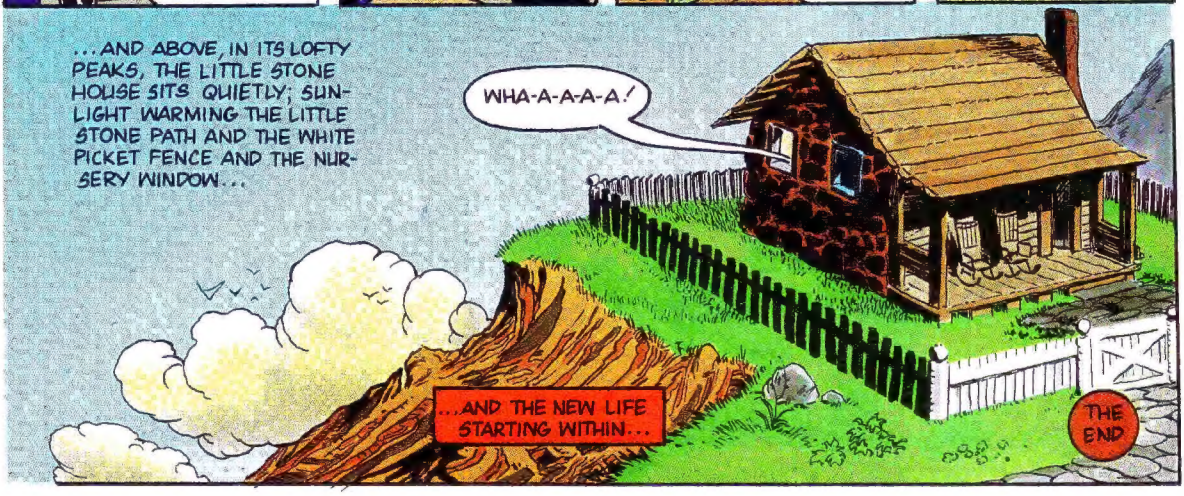
JENNY? THAT YOU, CORPORAL?
IT'S ME...
DID YOU SEE THE ENEMY? HOW MANY WERE THERE?
THEY'VE ALL LEFT, FRANK, ALL GONE BACK TO EARTH. ALL BUT ONE. THE WAR IS OVER...
BACK TO EARTH? ARE YOU NUTS?
THEY LIED TO US, FRANK. WE WERE THE ATTACKERS. WE WERE THE ENEMY.
...OR MAYBE... MAYBE SO MANY CENTURIES PASSED, NOBODY REALLY CARED ANYMORE...
SOMEONE'S BEEN LYING ALL RIGHT!
IF THE WAR IS OVER THEN WHY ARE THE BUG BOMBS STILL ATTACKING?
I DON'T KNOW... MAYBE THE BUG BOMBS WORK AUTOMATICALLY, INDEPENDENT OF THEIR CREATORS...
OH, GOD! OH, GOD, SHE'S DEAD!
YOU KILLED HER!! YOU MURDERED HER, YOU BASTARD!
WHY?
SHE WAS OF NO USE TO US. SHE WAS OF NO USE TO ANYONE! I PUT HER OUT OF HER MISERY!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
BURYING HER, WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE I'M DOING?
...YEAH, GOOD IDEA, GET RID OF THE STINK. JUST BE QUICK ABOUT IT, I'D LIKE SOME SUPPER!
WELL? HOW ABOUT IT? I SAID I'D LIKE SOME SUPPER NOW! YOU GONNA GIVE IT TO ME OR NOT?
I'M GOING TO GIVE IT TO YOU, FRANK...

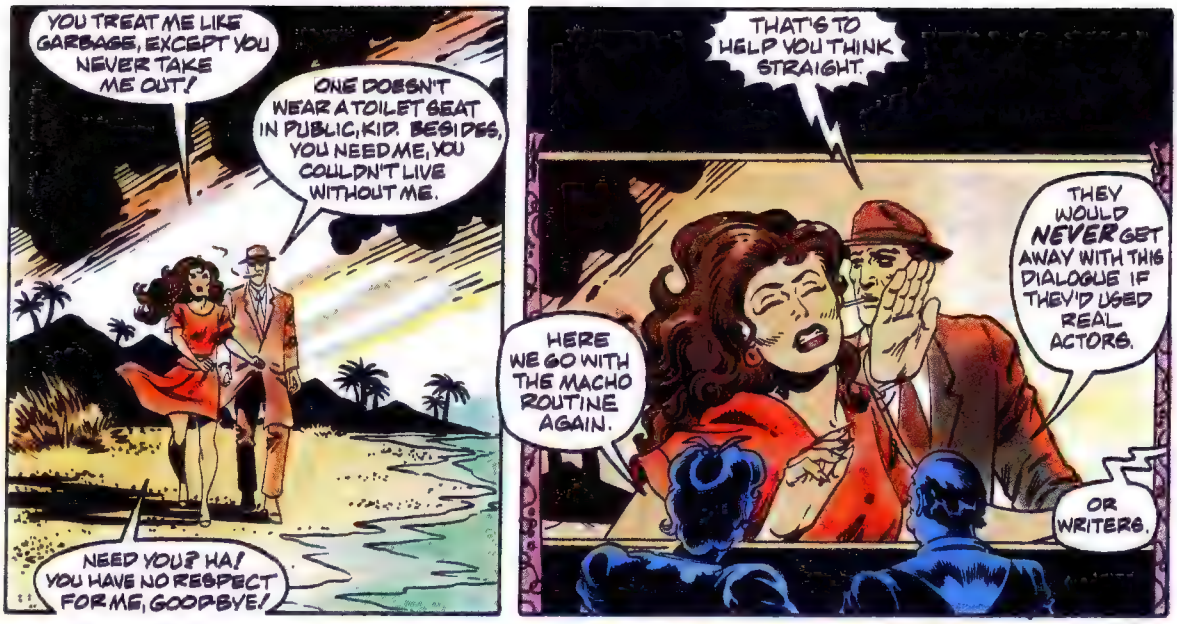

WHAT'S THIS?
HE LOVED HER, FRANK,,, NOT THAT YOU'D UNDERSTAND THAT WORD, BUT HE LOVED HER A LOT!
SHE WAS THE LAST OF HER RACE, THE ONLY THING WORTHWHILE IN HIS LIFE. AND YOU TOOK IT AWAY WITH THE SQUEEZE OF A FINGER,,,
...TAKE IT EASY, CORPORAL, MAKE SENSE!

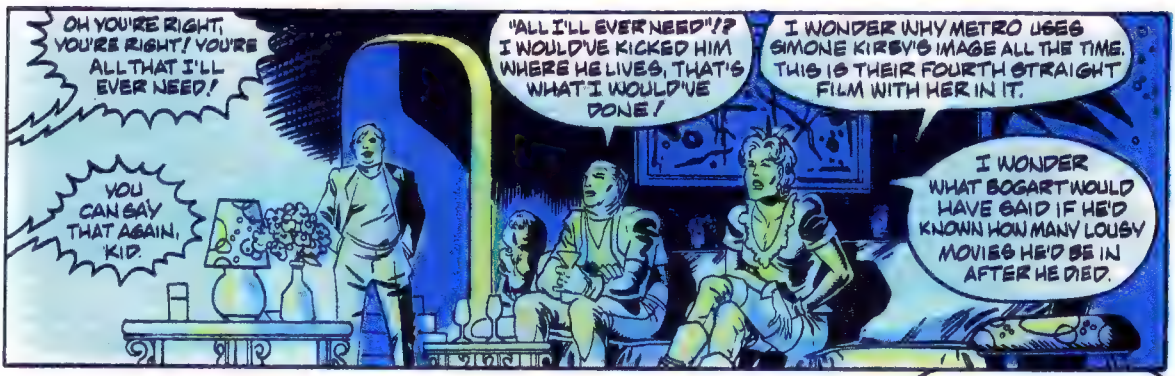


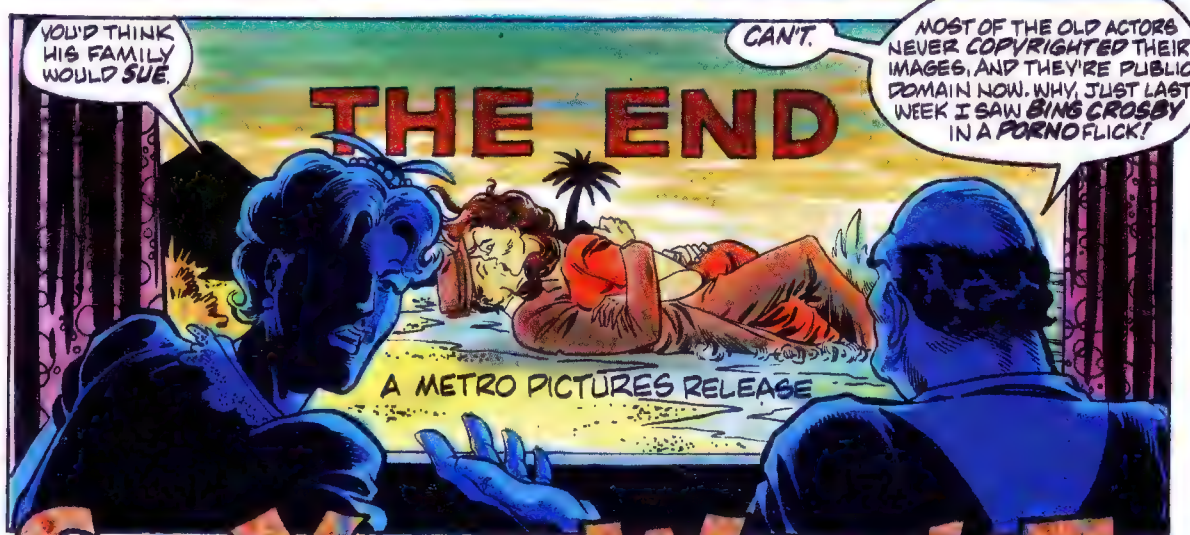
TARTUKA STANDS AS IT HAS FOR A MILLION CENTURIES... IT MIGHT STAND FOR A MILLION MORE. AT ITS BASE, TWO LONE GRAVE MARKERS SILHOUETTE THE SLOWLY CLEARING HAZE OF SMOKE AND DUST AND RADIOACTIVE DEATH...




...AND ABOVE, IN ITS LOFTY PEAKS, THE LITTLE STONE HOUSE SITS QUIETLY; SUNLIGHT WARMING THE LITTLE STONE PATH AND THE WHITE PICKET FENCE AND THE NURSERY WINDOW...
WHA-A-A-A-A!
...AND THE NEW LIFE STARTING WITHIN...
THE END

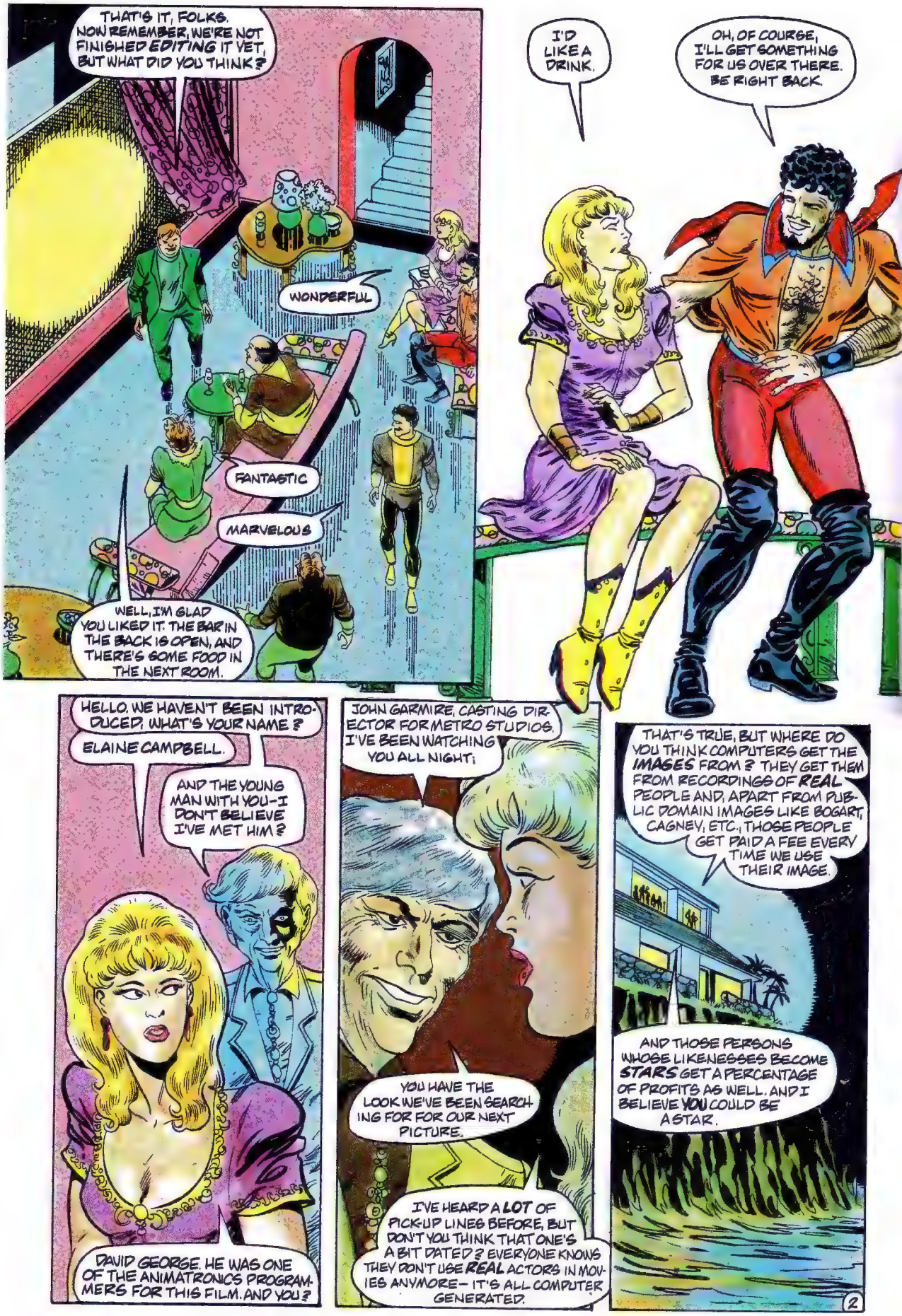

YOU TREAT ME LIKE GARBAGE, EXCEPT YOU NEVER TAKE ME OUT!
ONE DOESN'T WEAR A TOILET SEAT IN PUBLIC, KID. BESIDES, YOU NEED ME, YOU COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT ME.
NEED YOU? HA! YOU HAVE NO RESPECT FOR ME, GOODBYE!
THAT'S TO HELP YOU THINK STRAIGHT.
HERE WE GO WITH THE MACHO ROUTINE AGAIN.
THEY WOULD NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS DIALOGUE IF THEY'D USED REAL ACTORS.
OR WRITERS.


OH YOU'RE RIGHT, YOU'RE RIGHT! YOU'RE ALL THAT I'LL EVER NEED!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN, KID.
"ALL I'LL EVER NEED"!? I WOULD'VE KICKED HIM WHERE HE LIVES, THAT'S WHAT I WOULD'VE DONE!
I WONDER WHY METRO USES SIMONE KIRBY'S IMAGE ALL THE TIME. THIS IS THEIR FOURTH STRAIGHT FILM WITH HER IN IT.
I WONDER WHAT BOGART WOULD HAVE SAID IF HE'D KNOWN HOW MANY LOUSY MOVIES HE'D BE IN AFTER HE DIED.


YOU'D THINK HIS FAMILY WOULD SUE.
CAN'T.
MOST OF THE OLD ACTORS NEVER COPYRIGHTED THEIR IMAGES, AND THEY'RE PUBLIC DOMAIN NOW. WHY, JUST LAST WEEK I SAW BING CROSBY IN A PORNO FLICK!
THE END
A METRO PICTURES RELEASE

So You Want To Be in Pictures?

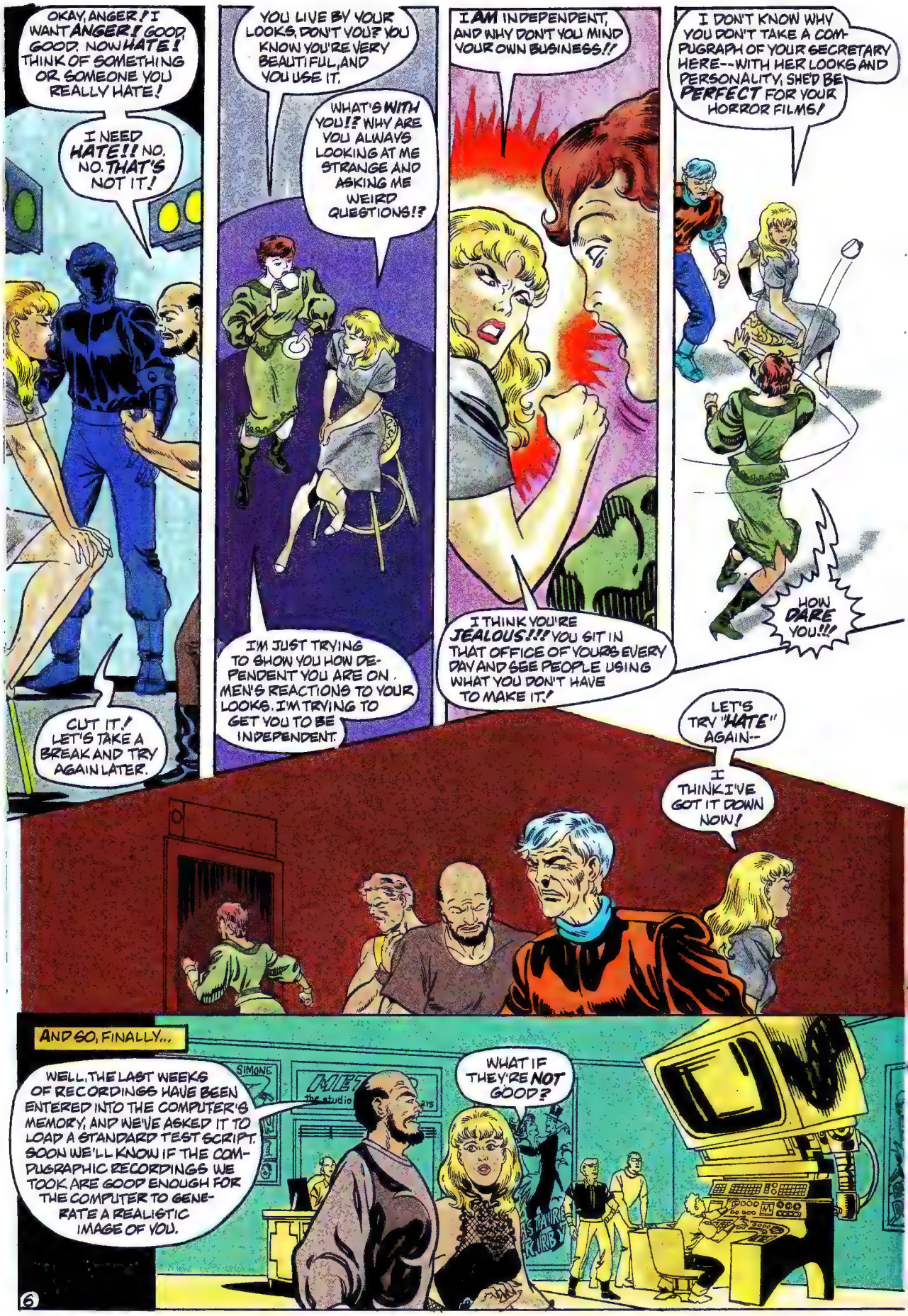
WRITER: DOUGLAS WHEELER
ARTIST: RICHARD HOWELL
LETTERER: WAYNE TRUMAN
COLORIST: TIM SMITH

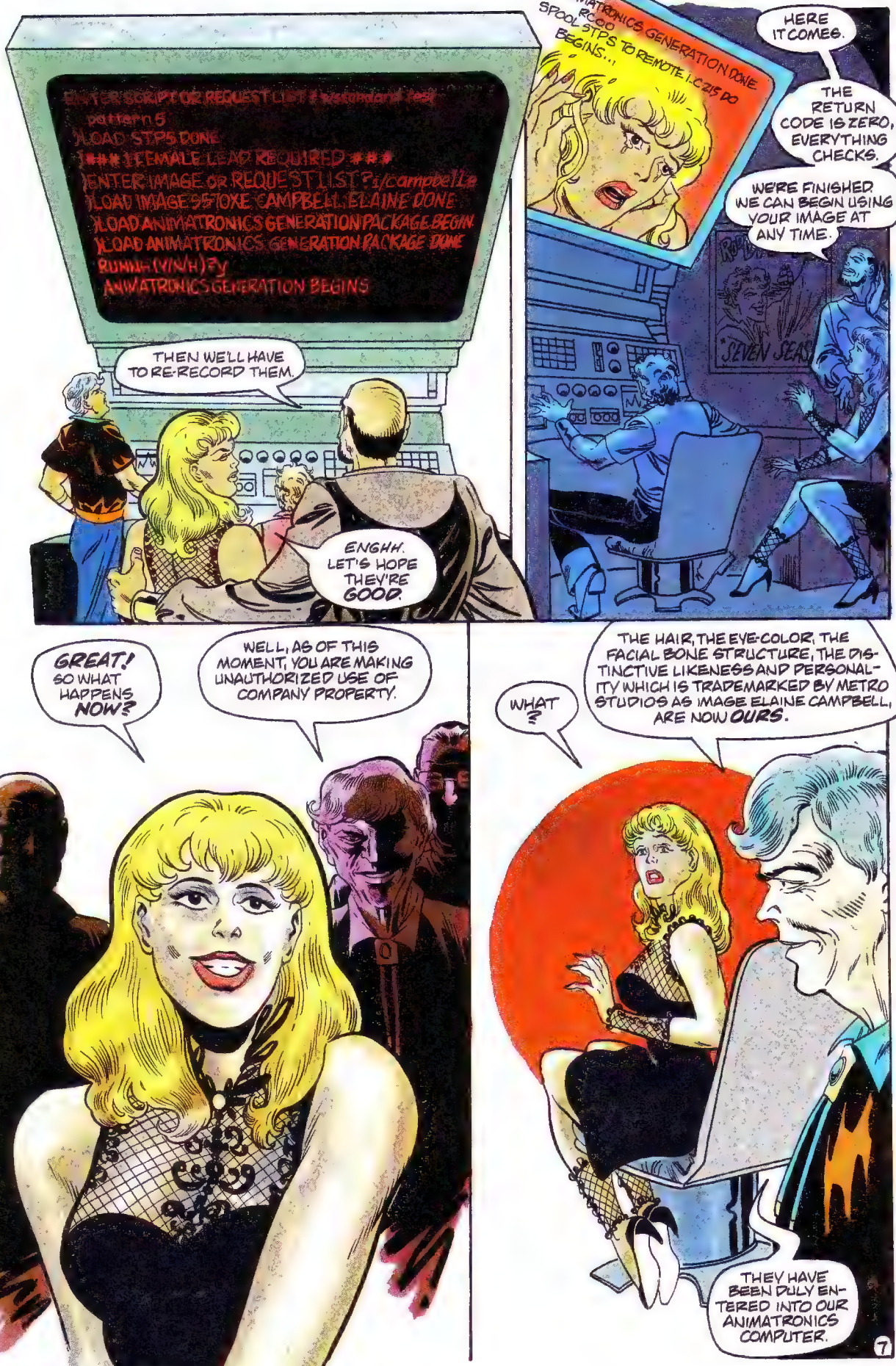

THAT'S IT, FOLKS. NOW REMEMBER, WE'RE NOT FINISHED EDITING IT YET, BUT WHAT DID YOU THINK?
WONDERFUL
FANTASTIC
MARVELOUS
WELL, I'M GLAD YOU LIKED IT. THE BAR IN THE BACK IS OPEN, AND THERE'S SOME FOOD IN THE NEXT ROOM.
I'D LIKE A DRINK.
OH, OF COURSE, I'LL GET SOMETHING FOR US OVER THERE. BE RIGHT BACK.
HELLO. WE HAVEN'T BEEN INTRODUCED, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
ELAINE CAMPBELL.
AND THE YOUNG MAN WITH YOU - I DON'T BELIEVE I'VE MET HIM?
DAVID GEORGE. HE WAS ONE OF THE ANIMATRONICS PROGRAMMERS FOR THIS FILM. AND YOU?
JOHN GARMIRE, CASTING DIRECTOR FOR METRO STUDIOS. I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU ALL NIGHT;
YOU HAVE THE LOOK WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR FOR OUR NEXT PICTURE.
I'VE HEARD A LOT OF PICK-UP LINES BEFORE, BUT DON'T YOU THINK THAT ONE'S A BIT DATED? EVERYONE KNOWS THEY DON'T USE REAL ACTORS IN MOVIES ANYMORE - IT'S ALL COMPUTER GENERATED.
THAT'S TRUE, BUT WHERE DO YOU THINK COMPUTERS GET THE IMAGES FROM? THEY GET THEM FROM RECORDINGS OF REAL PEOPLE AND, APART FROM PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGES LIKE BOGART, CAGNEY, ETC., THOSE PEOPLE GET PAID A FEE EVERY TIME WE USE THEIR IMAGE.
AND THOSE PERSONS WHOSE LIKENESSES BECOME STARS GET A PERCENTAGE OF PROFITS AS WELL. AND I BELIEVE YOU COULD BE A STAR.
2

HERE, TAKE MY CARD AND THINK ABOUT IT. BUT NOT TOO LONG. IT'S BEEN NICE MEETING YOU.
BYE.
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
OH...
...NOTHING.
A FEW DAYS LATER.
Sultry SIMONE
in
"and JACK CREATED WOMAN"
METR
the studio of a million st
HI, I'M ELAINE CAMPBELL. I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE MR. GARMIRE.
MR. GARMIRE- MS. CAMPBELL IS HERE.
TELL HER I'LL BE OUT IN A MOMENT.
HE'LL BE OUT IN A MOMENT. HE'S BEEN VERY EXCITED SINCE YOU CALLED. HE WANTS TO USE YOUR IMAGE IN THE STUDIO'S NEXT PICTURE- YOU'RE A VERY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.
THANK YOU.
All my love- Simone Kirby
WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITHOUT IT?
3

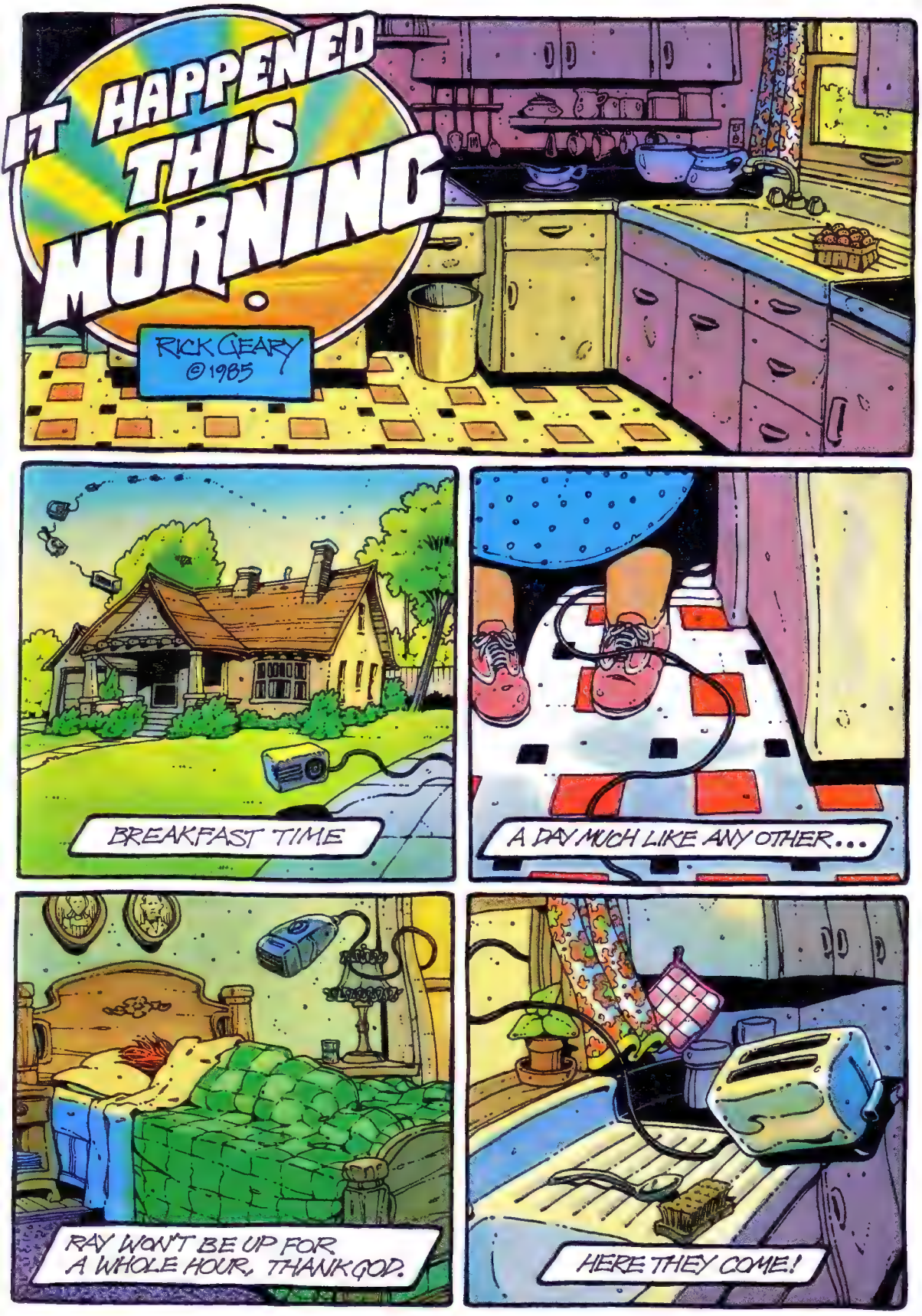
EXCUSE ME?
YOUR BEAUTY— IT WON'T LAST FOREVER, YOU KNOW. HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO SUPPORT YOUR-SELF WITHOUT IT?
ELAINE! GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN! COME IN!
...UM... YES,... THANK YOU!
WHAT THE HELL'S WITH HER?
WHO?
YOUR SECRETARY.
OH. NEVER MIND HER. SHE ACTS FUNNY SOME-TIMES--DEPENDS ON HER MOOD.
HERE'S YOUR CONTRACT. FEEL FREE TO LOOK IT OVER.
SIMONE LAUGHS
. UM, ISN'T THIS KIND OF THICK?
IT'S A STANDARD FORM.
YOU'RE SURE THIS CONTRACT IS ... FAIR?
IT GIVES METRO STUDIOS EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO YOUR IMAGE AND OUTWARD CHARACTERISTICS, SO NO OTHER STUDIO CAN USE YOUR LIKENESS SHOULD IT BECOME A BOX-OFFICE ATTRACTION.
IN EXCHANGE, WE GIVE YOU A PERCENTAGE OF THE PROFITS FOR EVERY FILM WE USE YOUR IMAGE IN, AND A FIXED FEE FOR BIT PARTS.
THE CONTRACT ALSO COVERS TV PROGRAMS AND ADS.
YOU ONLY NEED TO SIGN IT IN THREE PLACES AND WE CAN GET STARTED.
WE'LL TAKE TWO WEEKS WORTH OF COMPUGRAPHIC RE-CORDINGS OF YOU, FEED THEM INTO OUR ANIMATRONICS COM-PUTER, AND IT SHOULD THEN BE ABLE TO GENERATE REALISTIC IMAGES OF YOU ACTING IN WHAT-EVER SCENES OUR WRITERS COME UP WITH.
METRO
OH YES. IT'S OUR STANDARD FORM, AS I SAID. ALL OUR STARS HAVE SIGNED IT, FROM SIMONE KIRBY ON DOWN.
4

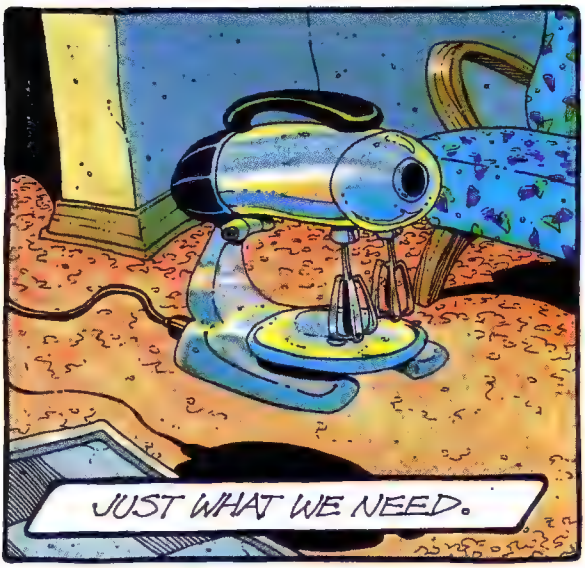
ALL RIGHT, THEN, I'LL SIGN!
I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD!
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS WALK AROUND...
...TWIST, TURN, SHAKE YOUR HEAD, WHATEVER.
WE WANT TO RECORD HOW YOU MOVE. JUST BE NATURAL, BE YOURSELF AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT HOW UGLY YOU THINK THE DRESS LOOKS ON YOU.
...IT'S JUST A GENERIC PIECE OF CLOTHING SO THE COMPUTER CAN GENERATE AN IMAGE OF HOW CLOTHES SHOULD FIT YOU AND MOVE WITH YOU.
WE'LL NEVER ACTUALLY SHOW YOU IN THAT PARTICULAR DRESS. ANYWAY, WE'LL BE SHOOTING YOU NUDE TOMORROW, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
"TURN AROUND--NO, FASTER; SO YOUR HAIR TOSSES!"
FASTER! FASTER! WE NEED TO HAVE RECORDINGS OF HOW YOU MOVE AT ALL SPEEDS!
"NEVER MIND HIM--HE'LL BE BLUE-SCREENED OUT LATER! WE NEED TO KNOW HOW YOU KISS!"
"PICK UP THAT GLASS! YES..."
I KNOW IT'S HOT!
I WANT TO SEE HOW YOU SWEAT!
"OKAY, VEXATION!"
"SORROW!"
"SURPRISE!"
"HORROR! GOOD..."
"NOW... CONTENTMENT."
5


OKAY, ANGER! I WANT ANGER! GOOD, GOOD. NOW HATE! THINK OF SOMETHING OR SOMEONE YOU REALLY HATE!
I NEED HATE!! NO, NO. THAT'S NOT IT!
CUT IT! LET'S TAKE A BREAK AND TRY AGAIN LATER.
YOU LIVE BY YOUR LOOKS, DON'T YOU? YOU KNOW YOU'RE VERY BEAUTIFUL, AND YOU USE IT.
WHAT'S WITH YOU!? WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS LOOKING AT ME STRANGE AND ASKING ME WEIRD QUESTIONS!?
I'M JUST TRYING TO SHOW YOU HOW DEPENDENT YOU ARE ON MEN'S REACTIONS TO YOUR LOOKS. I'M TRYING TO GET YOU TO BE INDEPENDENT.
I AM INDEPENDENT, AND WHY DON'T YOU MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!!
I THINK YOU'RE JEALOUS!!! YOU SIT IN THAT OFFICE OF YOURS EVERY DAY AND SEE PEOPLE USING WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE IT!
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU DON'T TAKE A COMPUGRAPH OF YOUR SECRETARY HERE--WITH HER LOOKS AND PERSONALITY, SHE'D BE PERFECT FOR YOUR HORROR FILMS!
HOW DARE YOU!!!
LET'S TRY "HATE" AGAIN--
I THINK I'VE GOT IT DOWN NOW!
AND SO, FINALLY...
WELL, THE LAST WEEKS OF RECORDINGS HAVE BEEN ENTERED INTO THE COMPUTER'S MEMORY, AND WE'VE ASKED IT TO LOAD A STANDARD TEST SCRIPT. SOON WE'LL KNOW IF THE COMPUGRAPHIC RECORDINGS WE TOOK ARE GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE COMPUTER TO GENERATE A REALISTIC IMAGE OF YOU.
WHAT IF THEY'RE NOT GOOD?
SIMONE

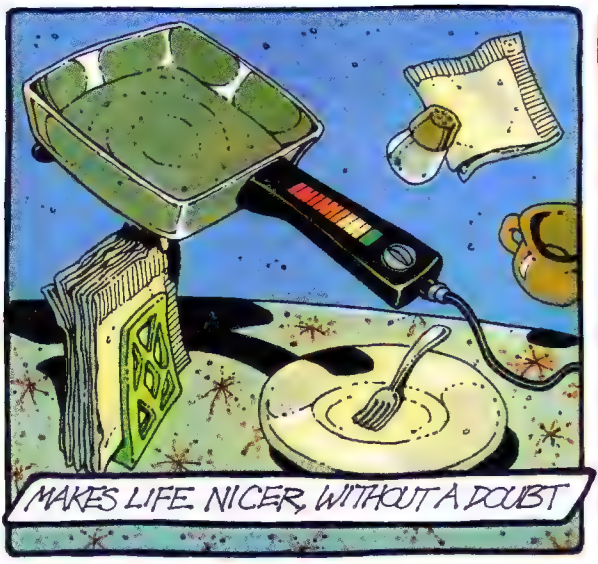

ENTER SCRIPT OR REQUEST LIST # /standard.test
pattern 5
)LOAD STPS DONE
)### FEMALE LEAD REQUIRED ###
)ENTER IMAGE OR REQUEST LIST ?/campbell.e
)LOAD IMAGE 55TOXE CAMPBELL, ELAINE DONE
)LOAD ANIMATRONICS GENERATION PACKAGE BEGIN
)LOAD ANIMATRONICS GENERATION PACKAGE DONE
RUNH (Y/N/H)?y
ANIMATRONICS GENERATION BEGINS
THEN WE'LL HAVE TO RE-RECORD THEM.
ENGHH. LET'S HOPE THEY'RE GOOD.
ANIMATRONICS GENERATION DONE
RC.00
SPOOL STPS TO REMOTE. I.CZ15 DO
BEGINS...
HERE IT COMES.
THE RETURN CODE IS ZERO, EVERYTHING CHECKS.
WE'RE FINISHED. WE CAN BEGIN USING YOUR IMAGE AT ANY TIME.
"SEVEN SEAS"
GREAT! SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
WELL, AS OF THIS MOMENT, YOU ARE MAKING UNAUTHORIZED USE OF COMPANY PROPERTY.
WHAT?
THE HAIR, THE EYE-COLOR, THE FACIAL BONE STRUCTURE, THE DISTINCTIVE LIKENESS AND PERSONALITY WHICH IS TRADEMARKED BY METRO STUDIOS AS IMAGE ELAINE CAMPBELL, ARE NOW OURS.
THEY HAVE BEEN DULY ENTERED INTO OUR ANIMATRONICS COMPUTER.
7

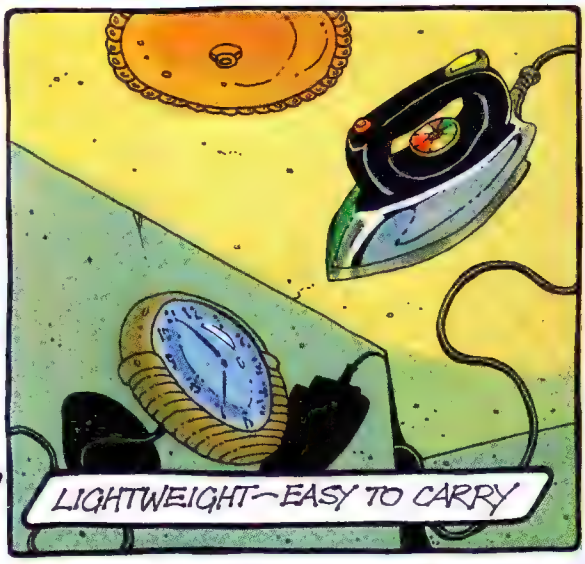
YOU SOLD THEM TO US.
"FACIAL STRUCTURE"!?
YOU WANT MY FACE!!?
MY ACTUAL FACE!!?
NOT YOUR FACE, MISS CAMPBELL! METRO STUDIOS' FACE.
REMEMBER, YOU SOLD US EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO YOUR IMAGE. IT NO LONGER BELONGS TO YOU, AND WE CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO CONTINUE MAKING UNAUTHORIZED USE OF IT--OTHERWISE, BY THE LEGAL PRINCIPLE OF "EASEMENT", WE MIGHT LOSE OUR COPYRIGHT TO YOUR IMAGE TO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.
Simone KIRBY
I WANT MY LAWYER!! YOU CAN'T DO THIS! IT'S BARBARIC!! IT'S ILLEGAL!!!
IT'S PERFECTLY LEGAL, MISS CAMPBELL;
YOU DON'T NEED TO CALL YOUR LAWYER, YOU ALREADY SIGNED THE CONTRACT.
BUT--
THERE'S NO REASON TO GET EXCITED.
DR. GRIVEN HERE IS AN EXCELLENT PLASTIC SURGEON...
NOOOOOO!
...ISN'T THAT RIGHT, SIMONE?
ABSOLUTELY, SIR.
THE END

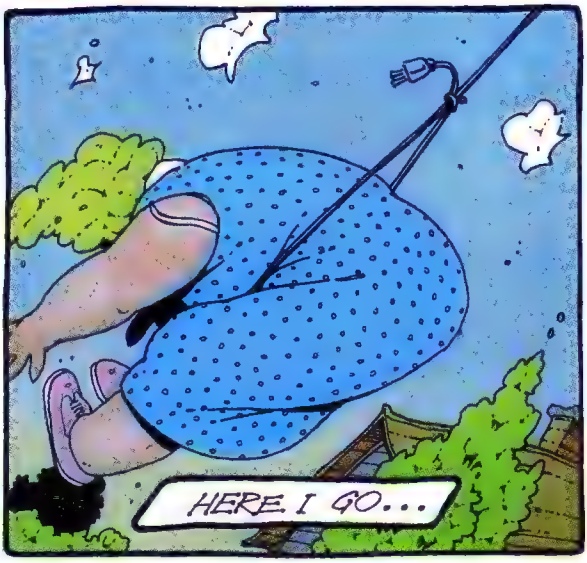

IT HAPPENED THIS MORNING
RICK GEARY ©1985
BREAKFAST TIME
A DAY MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER...
RAY WON'T BE UP FOR A WHOLE HOUR, THANK GOD.
HERE THEY COME!

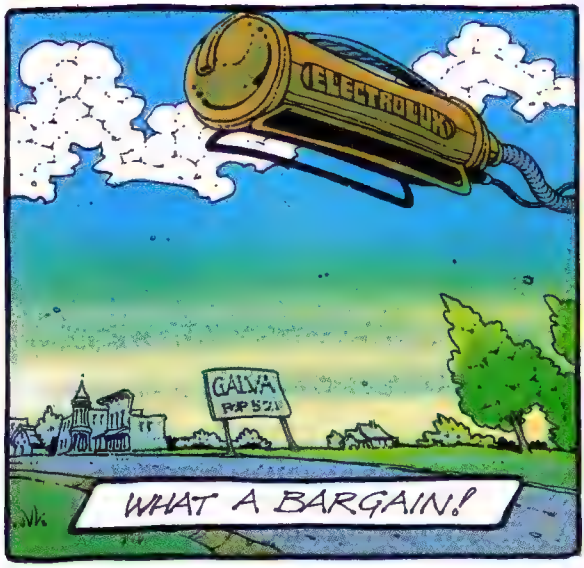

JUST WHAT WE NEED.

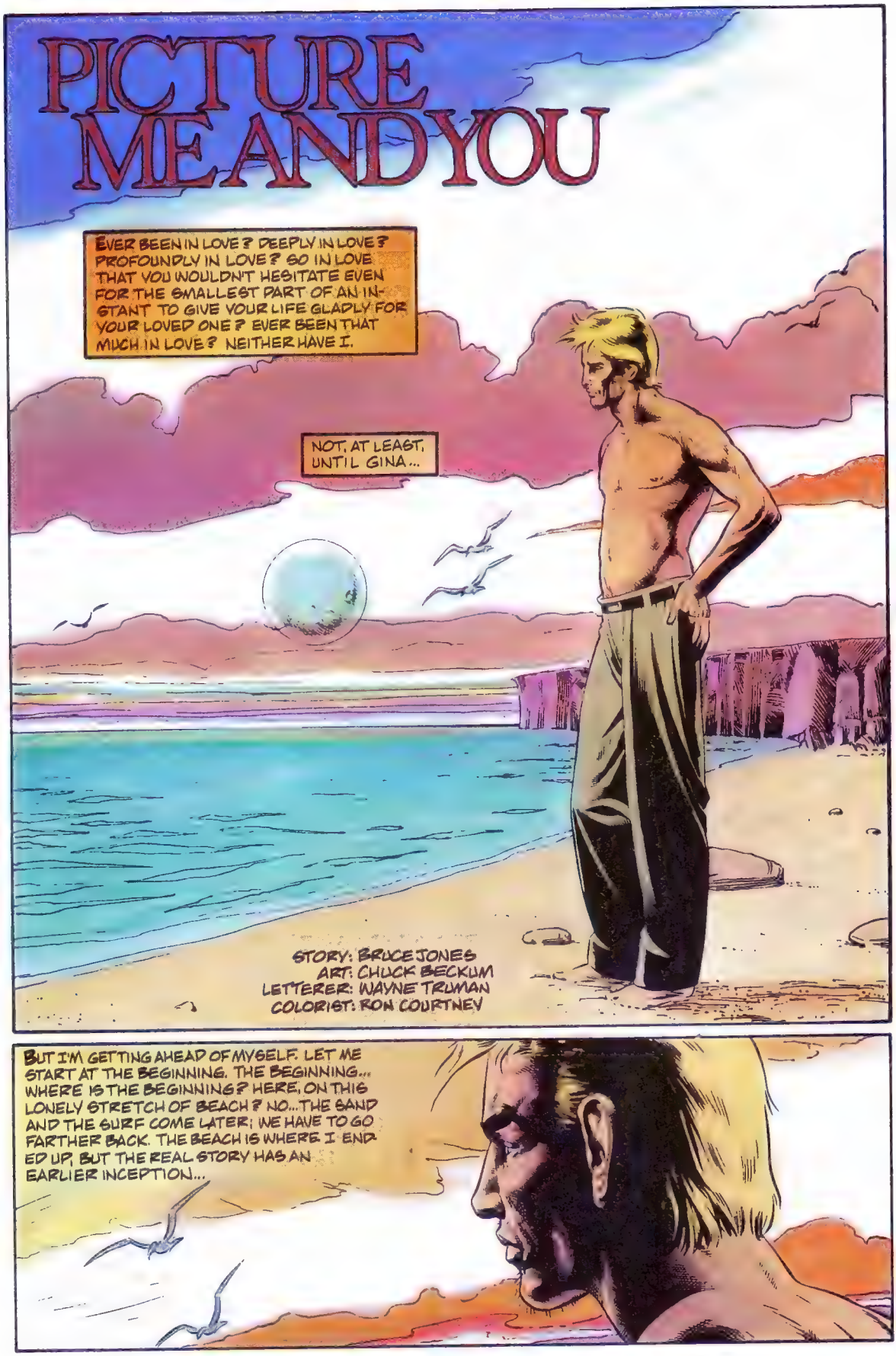
NO HOME SHOULD BE WITHOUT ONE


MAKES LIFE NICER, WITHOUT A DOUBT

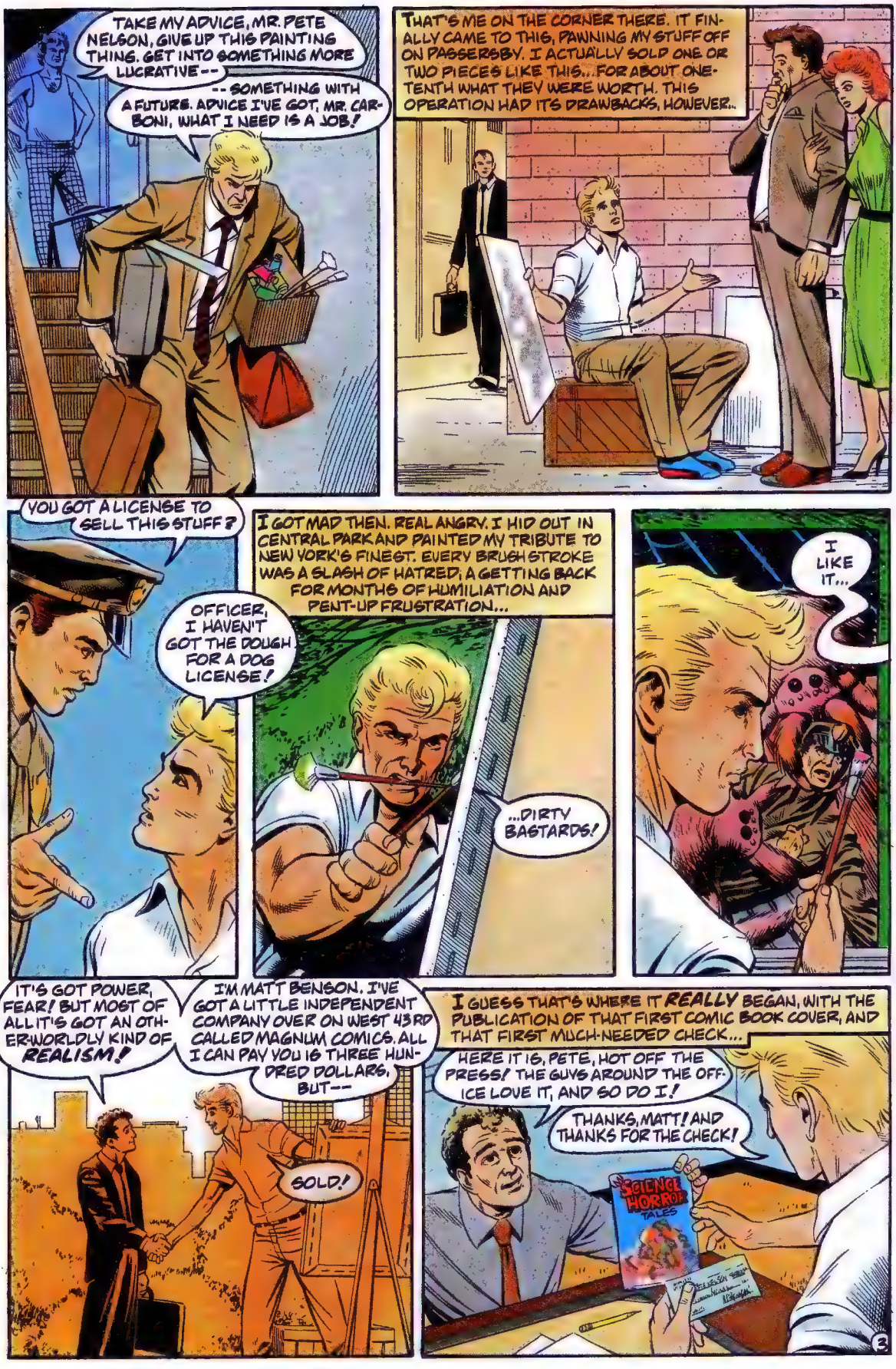

LIGHTWEIGHT—EASY TO CARRY


HERE I GO...


ELECTROLUX
GALVA
POP 521
WHAT A BARGAIN!

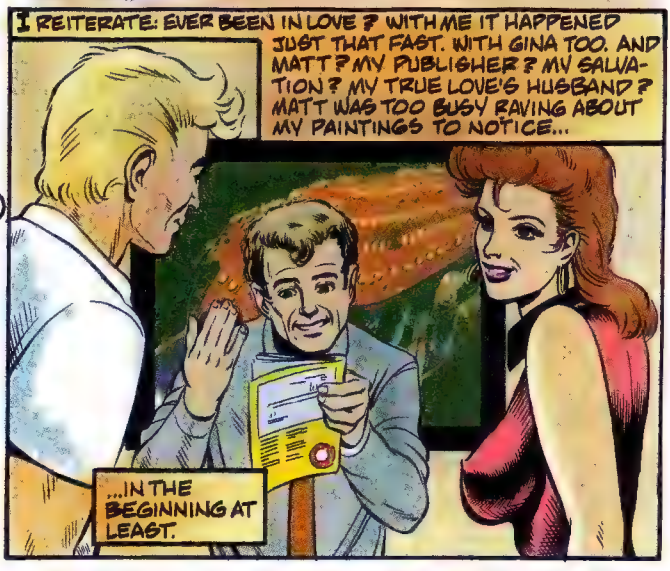

PICTURE ME AND YOU
EVER BEEN IN LOVE? DEEPLY IN LOVE? PROFOUNDLY IN LOVE? SO IN LOVE THAT YOU WOULDN'T HESITATE EVEN FOR THE SMALLEST PART OF AN INSTANT TO GIVE YOUR LIFE GLADLY FOR YOUR LOVED ONE? EVER BEEN THAT MUCH IN LOVE? NEITHER HAVE I.
NOT, AT LEAST, UNTIL GINA...
STORY: BRUCE JONES
ART: CHUCK BECKUM
LETTERER: WAYNE TRUMAN
COLORIST: RON COURTNEY
BUT I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF. LET ME START AT THE BEGINNING. THE BEGINNING... WHERE IS THE BEGINNING? HERE, ON THIS LONELY STRETCH OF BEACH? NO...THE SAND AND THE SURF COME LATER; WE HAVE TO GO FARTHER BACK. THE BEACH IS WHERE I ENDED UP, BUT THE REAL STORY HAS AN EARLIER INCEPTION...

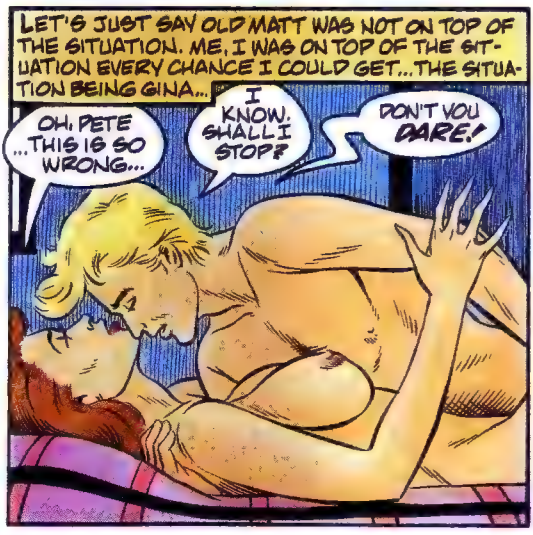
I'M A PAINTER, AN ILLUSTRATOR. WELL, LET ME QUALIFY THAT: I'M AN ILLUSTRATOR NOW, I HOPE ANYWAY. BUT IN THE BEGINNING --HA!--IN THE BEGINNING I COULDN'T GET ARRESTED WITH MY PAINTINGS!
AS ANYONE IN THIS BUSINESS WILL TELL YOU, WHEN YOU'RE ESTABLISHED YOU'RE ESTABLISHED, AND WHEN YOU'RE JUST STARTING OUT...WELL...
...UH-HUH, NICE STUFF, YEAH. THE THING IS, THOUGH, WE AREN'T LOOKING FOR ANY NEW TALENT RIGHT AT THE MOMENT.
WELL, THANKS ANYWAY...
SCIENCE FICTION WAS MY PASSION. I'D LOVED IT SINCE I WAS A KID. KELLY FREAS, STANLEY MELTZOFF, ALEX SCHOMBURG, I KNEW ALL THE GREAT ARTISTS, EVEN IMITATED THEIR STYLES. TROUBLE WAS, THERE WERE MORE TITLES TO SELL TO IN THOSE DAYS...
...UH-HUH, NICE STUFF, YEAH. THE THING IS, THOUGH--
--YOU AREN'T LOOKING FOR ANY NEW TALENT RIGHT AT THE MOMENT.
WELL, PEOPLE WARNED ME; MY PARENTS, MY FRIENDS. THIS ISN'T THE 40'S, THEY SAID. THIS ISN'T EXACTLY THE GOLDEN AGE OF ILLUSTRATION. KNOW SOMETHING? THEY WERE RIGHT...
EVERYONE HAD ADVICE. GET INTO SOMETHING LUCRATIVE, THEY SAID, SOMETHING WITH A FUTURE. BUT I'M A PAINTER! I EXPLAINED. THEY LAUGHED. ALL EXCEPT MR. CARBONI, MY LANDLORD. HE DIDN'T LAUGH...
3C
WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT'S THIS? THIS IS EVERYTHING YOU OWN IN THE WORLD, MR. NELSON, ALL NEATLY PACKED AND READY FOR YOU TO TAKE AWAY. YOU GOT EVERYTHING IN THESE SUITCASES BUT MONEY. THAT I COULDN'T FIND NOWHERE.
YOU'RE THROWING ME OUT...
4C
YOU'RE A BRIGHT KID. BROKE, BUT BRIGHT. TWO MONTHS RENT YOU OWE ME. BUT AM I KEEPING YOUR VALUABLES LIKE SOME LANDLORDS WOULD UNTIL YOU PAY UP? NO. NOT ME. BECAUSE I'M A NICE GUY? YEG. ALSO BECAUSE, MR. PETE NELSON, YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' VALUABLE!
2

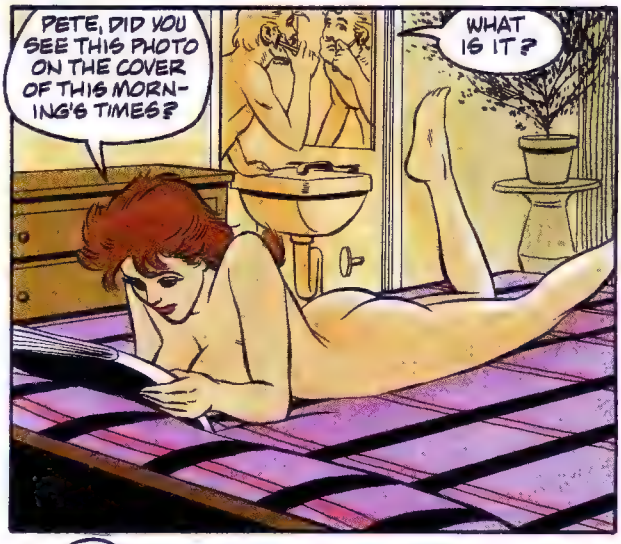

TAKE MY ADVICE, MR. PETE NELSON, GIVE UP THIS PAINTING THING. GET INTO SOMETHING MORE LUCRATIVE--
--SOMETHING WITH A FUTURE. ADVICE I'VE GOT, MR. CARBONI, WHAT I NEED IS A JOB!
THAT'S ME ON THE CORNER THERE. IT FINALLY CAME TO THIS, PAWNING MY STUFF OFF ON PASSERSBY. I ACTUALLY SOLD ONE OR TWO PIECES LIKE THIS... FOR ABOUT ONE-TENTH WHAT THEY WERE WORTH. THIS OPERATION HAD ITS DRAWBACKS, HOWEVER...
YOU GOT A LICENSE TO SELL THIS STUFF?
OFFICER, I HAVEN'T GOT THE DOUGH FOR A DOG LICENSE!
I GOT MAD THEN. REAL ANGRY. I HID OUT IN CENTRAL PARK AND PAINTED MY TRIBUTE TO NEW YORK'S FINEST. EVERY BRUSH STROKE WAS A SLASH OF HATRED; A GETTING BACK FOR MONTHS OF HUMILIATION AND PENT-UP FRUSTRATION...
...DIRTY BASTARDS!
I LIKE IT...
IT'S GOT POWER, FEAR! BUT MOST OF ALL IT'S GOT AN OTHERWORLDLY KIND OF REALISM!
I'M MATT BENSON. I'VE GOT A LITTLE INDEPENDENT COMPANY OVER ON WEST 43RD CALLED MAGNUM COMICS. ALL I CAN PAY YOU IS THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS, BUT--
SOLD!
I GUESS THAT'S WHERE IT REALLY BEGAN, WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THAT FIRST COMIC BOOK COVER, AND THAT FIRST MUCH-NEEDED CHECK...
HERE IT IS, PETE, HOT OFF THE PRESS! THE GUYS AROUND THE OFFICE LOVE IT, AND SO DO I!
THANKS, MATT! AND THANKS FOR THE CHECK!
SCIENCE HORROR TALES
3

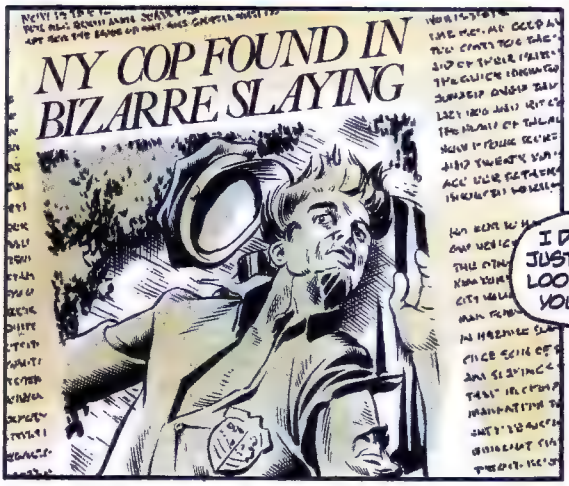
GOOD NEWS, MATT! GORDY'S COMICS WORLD JUST ORDERED ANOTHER HUNDRED COPIES! THEY LOVE THE PETE NELSON COVER!
..HELLO...
GINA, MEET THE ARTIST IN THE FLESH. THIS IS PETE NELSON. PETE, GINA BENSON, MY COPY READER AND WIFE!

HELLO, PETE...I'M YOUR BIGGEST FAN...

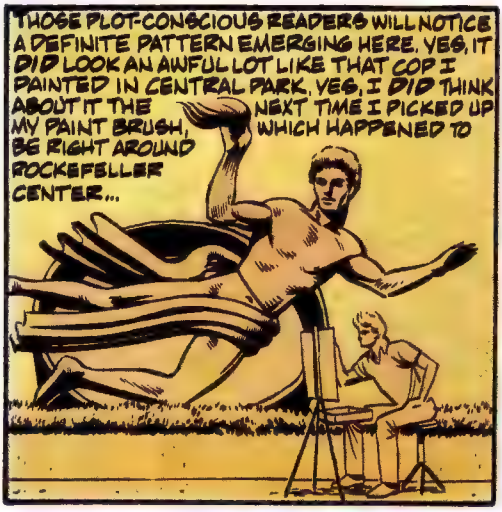

I REITERATE: EVER BEEN IN LOVE? WITH ME IT HAPPENED JUST THAT FAST. WITH GINA TOO. AND MATT? MY PUBLISHER? MY SALVATION? MY TRUE LOVE'S HUSBAND? MATT WAS TOO BUSY RAVING ABOUT MY PAINTINGS TO NOTICE...
...IN THE BEGINNING AT LEAST.

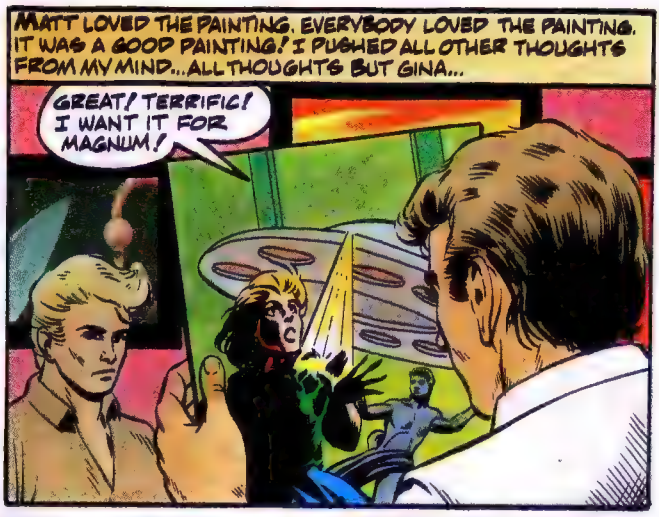

LET'S JUST SAY OLD MATT WAS NOT ON TOP OF THE SITUATION. ME, I WAS ON TOP OF THE SITUATION EVERY CHANCE I COULD GET...THE SITUATION BEING GINA...
OH, PETE ...THIS IS SO WRONG...
I KNOW. SHALL I STOP?
DON'T YOU DARE!


PETE, DID YOU SEE THIS PHOTO ON THE COVER OF THIS MORNING'S TIMES?
WHAT IS IT?


NY COP FOUND IN BIZARRE SLAYING

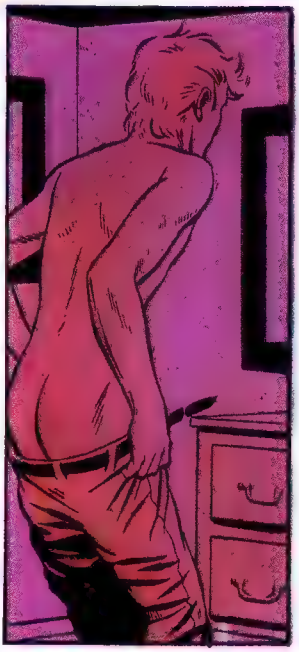
TOO BAD. SO WHAT?
I DON'T KNOW... IT'S JUST THAT, DOESN'T IT LOOK AN AWFUL LOT LIKE YOUR PAINTING?
A MIXTURE IS MINED!

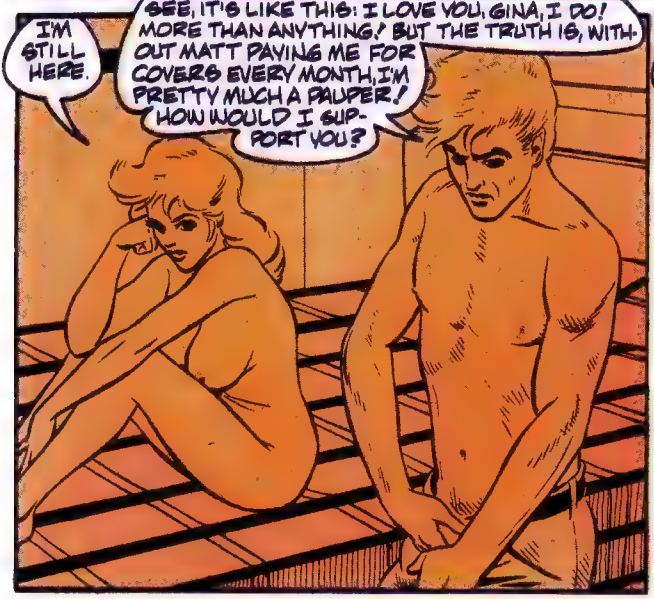

THOSE PLOT-CONSCIOUS READERS WILL NOTICE A DEFINITE PATTERN EMERGING HERE. YES, IT DID LOOK AN AWFUL LOT LIKE THAT COP I PAINTED IN CENTRAL PARK. YES, I DID THINK ABOUT IT THE NEXT TIME I PICKED UP MY PAINT BRUSH, WHICH HAPPENED TO BE RIGHT AROUND ROCKEFELLER CENTER...

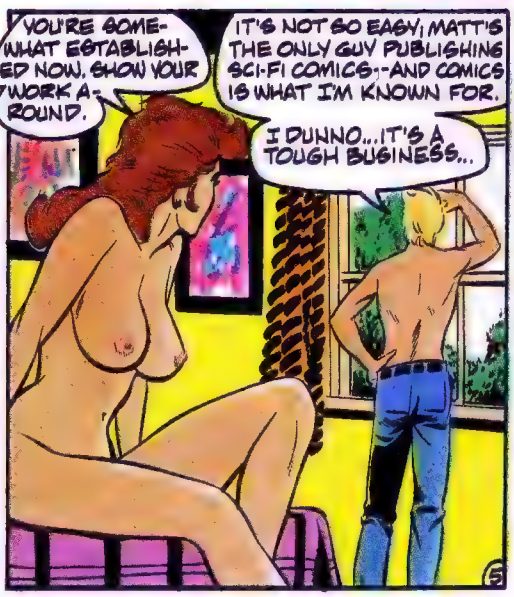

MATT LOVED THE PAINTING. EVERYBODY LOVED THE PAINTING. IT WAS A GOOD PAINTING! I PUSHED ALL OTHER THOUGHTS FROM MY MIND... ALL THOUGHTS BUT GINA...
GREAT! TERRIFIC! I WANT IT FOR MAGNUM!

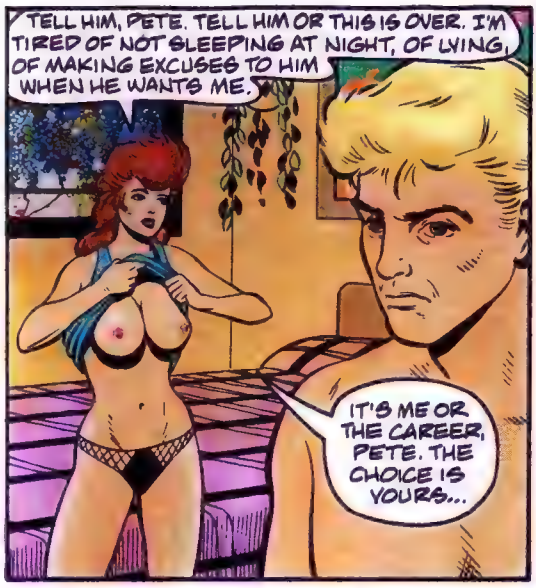
I WANT YOU TO TELL HIM, PETE. THIS IS-N'T FAIR TO HIM. THIS ISN'T FAIR TO ANYONE. WE CAN'T GO ON LIVING A LIE THIS WAY. I WANT YOU TO TELL HIM.
PETE? DID YOU HEAR ME?

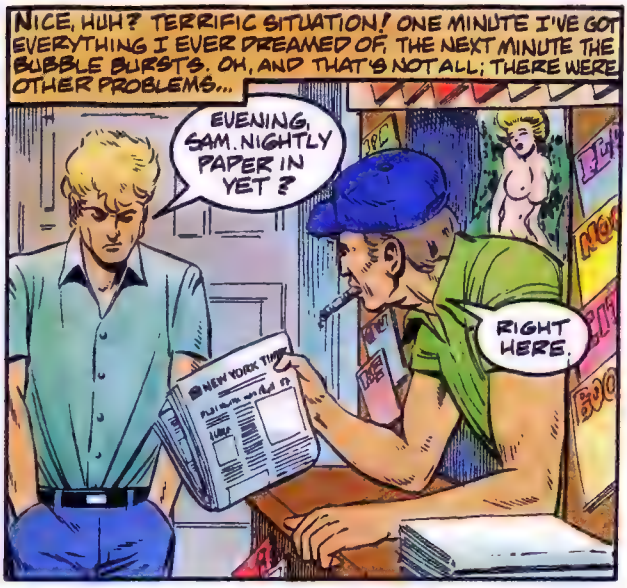
I HEARD, I HEARD.
WELL?

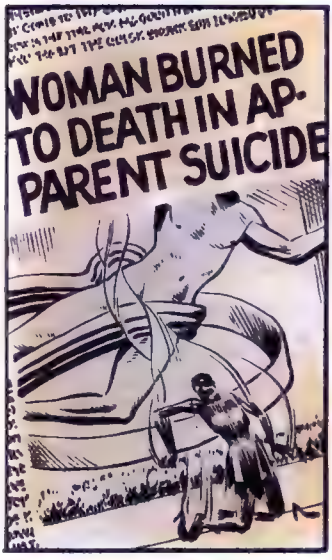



I'M STILL HERE.
SEE, IT'S LIKE THIS: I LOVE YOU, GINA, I DO! MORE THAN ANYTHING! BUT THE TRUTH IS, WITH-OUT MATT PAYING ME FOR COVERS EVERY MONTH, I'M PRETTY MUCH A PAUPER! HOW WOULD I SUP-PORT YOU?

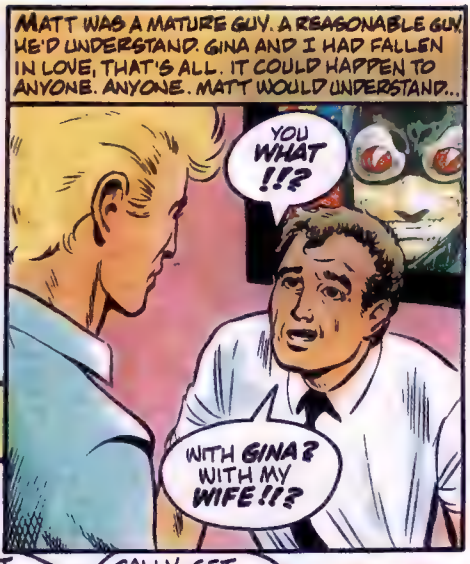

YOU'RE SOME-WHAT ESTABLISH-ED NOW. SHOW YOUR WORK A-ROUND.
IT'S NOT SO EASY; MATT'S THE ONLY GUY PUBLISHING SCI-FI COMICS--AND COMICS IS WHAT I'M KNOWN FOR.
I DUNNO... IT'S A TOUGH BUSINESS...


TELL HIM, PETE. TELL HIM OR THIS IS OVER. I'M TIRED OF NOT SLEEPING AT NIGHT, OF LYING, OF MAKING EXCUSES TO HIM WHEN HE WANTS ME.
IT'S ME OR THE CAREER, PETE. THE CHOICE IS YOURS...

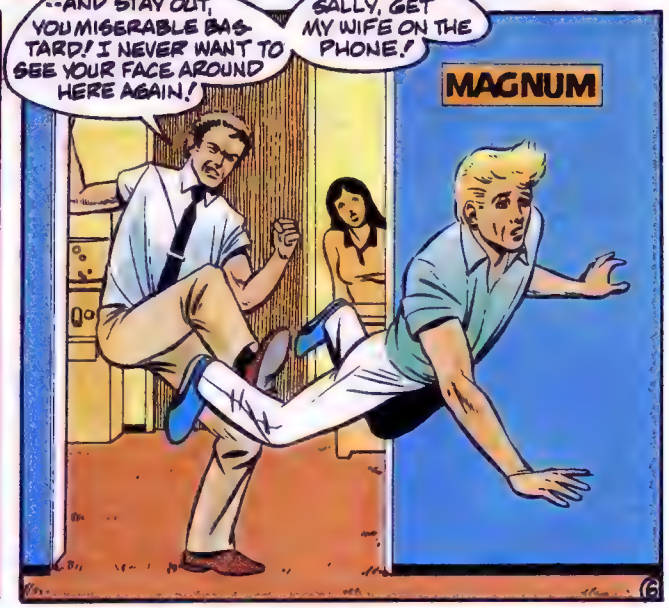

NICE, HUH? TERRIFIC SITUATION! ONE MINUTE I'VE GOT EVERYTHING I EVER DREAMED OF, THE NEXT MINUTE THE BUBBLE BURSTS. OH, AND THAT'S NOT ALL; THERE WERE OTHER PROBLEMS...
EVENING, SAM. NIGHTLY PAPER IN YET?
NEW YORK TIMES
RIGHT HERE.


WOMAN BURNED TO DEATH IN AP-PARENT SUICIDE

BUT WE KNOW IT WASN'T A SUI-CIDE, DON'T WE? WE KNOW IT WAS A HEAT RAY FROM A FLYING SAU-CER FROM A #286 GRUMBACHER PAINT BRUSH!
ENOUGH WAS ENOUGH. IF I HAD-N'T ALREADY HAD SUFFICIENT IMPETUS TO TALK TO MATT, I DID NOW...


MATT WAS A MATURE GUY. A REASONABLE GUY. HE'D UNDERSTAND. GINA AND I HAD FALLEN IN LOVE, THAT'S ALL. IT COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE. ANYONE. MATT WOULD UNDERSTAND...
YOU WHAT!!?
WITH GINA? WITH MY WIFE!!?

YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT A LITTLE GUY LIKE THAT COULD PUNCH...


--AND STAY OUT, YOU MISERABLE BAS-TARD! I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE AROUND HERE AGAIN!
SALLY, GET MY WIFE ON THE PHONE!
MAGNUM

AND NOW FOR THE SAD PART. YES, IT GETS WORSE. I TOLD GINA ABOUT MY, AH--"CONVERSATION" WITH MATT. SHE THREW HER ARMS AROUND ME. KISSED ME. TOLD ME SHE LOVED ME. EVERYTHING WOULD BE FINE. IT WASN'T.

WE WENT SAILING...

IT WASN'T MY BOAT, IT BELONGED TO A FRIEND OF GINA'S. SORT OF A PRE-HONEYMOON JAUNT. TWO TURTLE DOVES ADRIFT ON A SEA OF LOVE. IT WAS ALL SO BEAUTIFUL AND SERENE, I EVEN QUIT WORRYING ABOUT HOW I WOULD SUPPORT US.

THEN THE STORM HIT...

GINA WAS HELPING ME LOWER THE SAIL WHEN THE BIG WAVE STRUCK US...

EEEEE!

GINA!

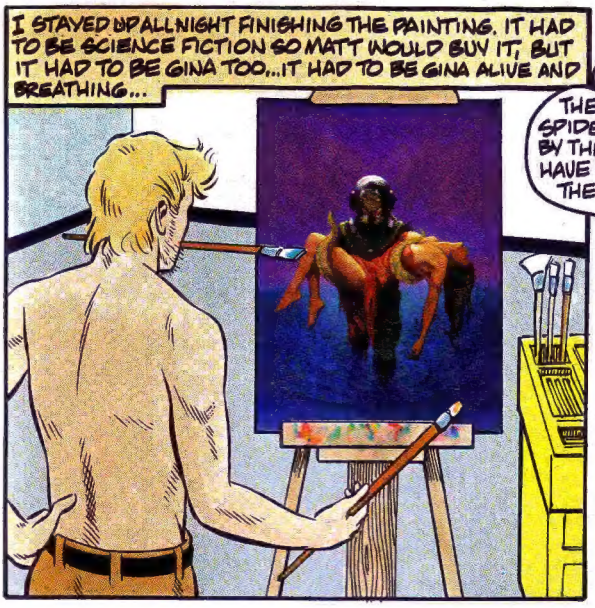
GINA!

I CAN'T SWIM. NOT THAT IT WOULD HAVE HELPED MUCH IN THAT SEA. I WAS LUCKY TO GET BACK TO SHORE ALIVE...

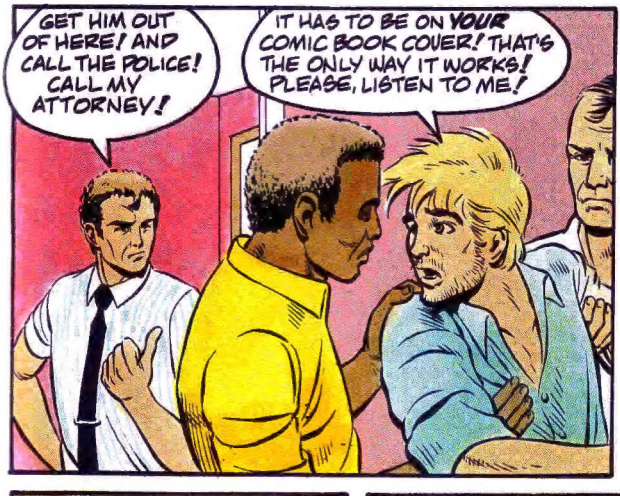
GINA...OH GOD, GINA!...(SOB)...I'VE LOST EVERYTHING...

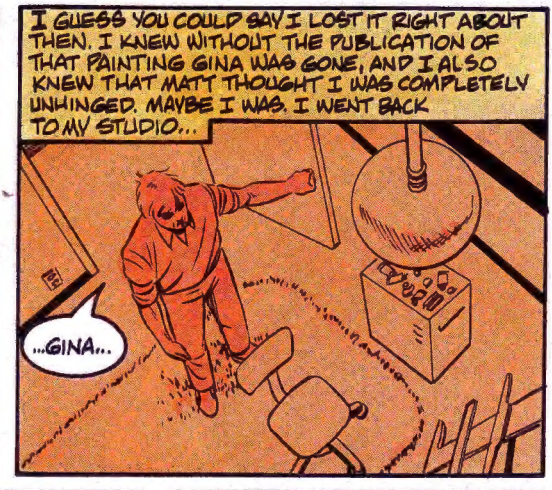
OF COURSE, COMPARED TO THE COP IN CENTRAL PARK AND THE WOMAN IN ROCKEFELLER CENTER, I WASN'T DOING HALF BAD. AND, THAT GAVE ME AN IDEA. MY PAINTINGS HAD ALWAYS BEEN A PORTENT OF DOOM.

WHAT IF IT WORKED THE OTHER WAY, TOO?...


I STAYED UP ALL NIGHT FINISHING THE PAINTING. IT HAD TO BE SCIENCE FICTION SO MATT WOULD BUY IT, BUT IT HAD TO BE GINA TOO...IT HAD TO BE GINA ALIVE AND BREATHING...

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND COMING IN HERE, NELSON! FIRST YOU GET MY WIFE KILLED, THEN YOU BRING IN THIS HIDEOUS PORTRAIT OF HER WITH THIS...THING AND EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE SOME INSANE BLACK MAGIC STORY!
BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY! DON'T YOU SEE, THE COP GOT EATEN BY THE SPIDER, THE WOMAN GOT BURNED BY THE SAUCER! ONLY FIRST YOU HAVE TO PUBLISH IT! THAT'S THE SECRET!

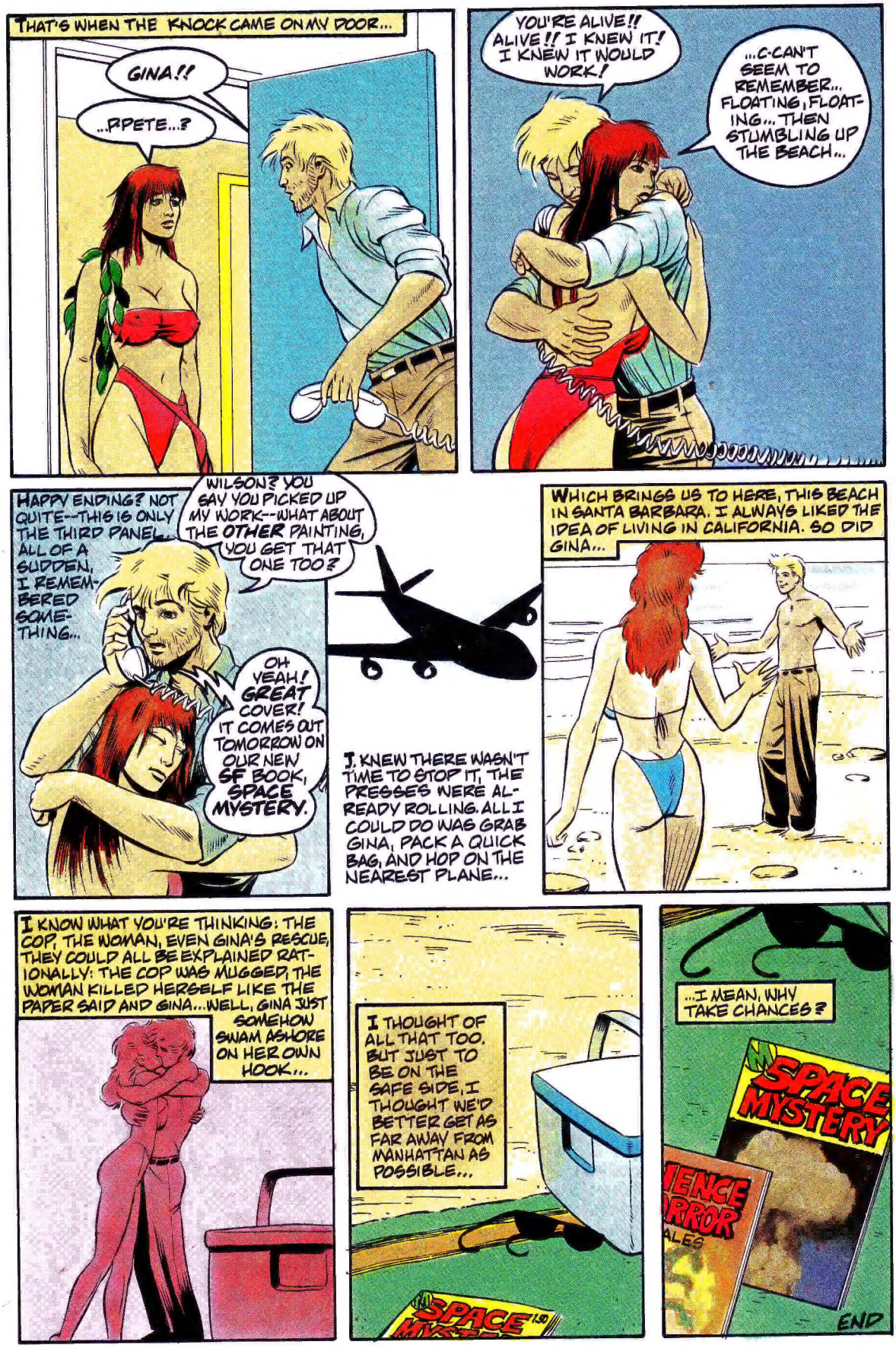

GET HIM OUT OF HERE! AND CALL THE POLICE! CALL MY ATTORNEY!
IT HAS TO BE ON YOUR COMIC BOOK COVER! THAT'S THE ONLY WAY IT WORKS! PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME!


I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I LOST IT RIGHT ABOUT THEN. I KNEW WITHOUT THE PUBLICATION OF THAT PAINTING GINA WAS GONE, AND I ALSO KNEW THAT MATT THOUGHT I WAS COMPLETELY UNHINGED. MAYBE I WAS. I WENT BACK TO MY STUDIO...
...GINA...

SO, I DID ANOTHER PAINTING. A PAINTING OF FEAR AND FRUSTRATION AND DEEP SEATED HATRED. HATRED OF MATT, OF MYSELF, OF THE WHOLE STINKING TOWN. I TOOK ALL THE POISON ROILING INSIDE MY GUTS AND POURED IT OUT THROUGH THAT PAINT BRUSH. THEN, I SLEPT...

AND AFTER I SLEPT I WENT FOR A WALK--A DRUNKEN WALK--EVERYWHERE, ANYWHERE, ALL OVER THE CITY, I HIT A LOT OF BARS. I WAS GONE FOR DAYS, MAYBE WEEKS. AND WHEN I STUMBLED BACK HOME, GUESS WHAT WAS WAITING IN MY MAILBOX?
A CHECK? FROM MAGNUM COMICS?

THIS IS PETE NELSON, IS MATT BENSON THERE?
BENSON QUIT A WEEK AGO. THIS IS PAUL WILSON, THE NEW EDITOR. WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH YOU, NELSON. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND--WE DROPPED BY AND PICKED UP YOUR LATEST WORK. THE OCTOPUS-MAN COVER CAME OUT GREAT! IT'S ON THE STANDS NOW, HAVE YOU SEEN IT?


THAT'S WHEN THE KNOCK CAME ON MY DOOR...
GINA!!
..RPETE...?
YOU'RE ALIVE!! ALIVE!! I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT WOULD WORK!
...C-CAN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER... FLOATING, FLOATING... THEN STUMBLING UP THE BEACH...
HAPPY ENDING? NOT QUITE--THIS IS ONLY THE THIRD PANEL... ALL OF A SUDDEN, I REMEMBERED SOMETHING...
WILSON? YOU SAY YOU PICKED UP MY WORK--WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER PAINTING, YOU GET THAT ONE TOO?
OH YEAH! GREAT COVER! IT COMES OUT TOMORROW ON OUR NEW SF BOOK, SPACE MYSTERY.
I KNEW THERE WASN'T TIME TO STOP IT, THE PRESSES WERE ALREADY ROLLING. ALL I COULD DO WAS GRAB GINA, PACK A QUICK BAG, AND HOP ON THE NEAREST PLANE...
WHICH BRINGS US TO HERE, THIS BEACH IN SANTA BARBARA. I ALWAYS LIKED THE IDEA OF LIVING IN CALIFORNIA. SO DID GINA...
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: THE COP, THE WOMAN, EVEN GINA'S RESCUE, THEY COULD ALL BE EXPLAINED RATIONALLY: THE COP WAS MUGGED, THE WOMAN KILLED HERSELF LIKE THE PAPER SAID AND GINA...WELL, GINA JUST SOMEHOW SWAM ASHORE ON HER OWN HOOK...
I THOUGHT OF ALL THAT TOO. BUT JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE, I THOUGHT WE'D BETTER GET AS FAR AWAY FROM MANHATTAN AS POSSIBLE...
...I MEAN, WHY TAKE CHANCES?
SPACE MYSTERY
END

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.
THE MAN LOCKING HIS FRONT DOOR IS JAMES D. HUDNALL. HE CLUTCHES A PACKAGE IN HIS HANDS AS IF IT WERE A SECRET DOCUMENT HIS EYES MOVE FURTIVELY BEHIND DARK GLASSES, MAKING SURE NO ONE IS WATCHING.
HE'S GLAD THE POST OFFICE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER...
HE MAKES ALL 500 YARDS OF THE JOURNEY WITHOUT INCIDENT. TEN MINUTES OF WAITING IN LINE BEHIND A GUY WHO SUCKS HIS TEETH IS ALL HE HAS TO ENDURE.
I'D LIKE THIS SENT REGISTERED MAIL, PLEASE.
ENGLAND, HUH? LOOKS INTERESTING! IS IT IMPORTANT?
YEP.
OXFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND. ONE WEEK LATER.
THE PATTER OF RAIN ON THE ROOF IS THE FIRST THING DAVID LLOYD HEARS AS HE WAKES UP. THEN COMES THE POUNDING ON THE DOOR.
REGISTERED PACKAGE.
WHAT-? OH...THANKS
HE'S BEEN WORKING ON THIS PROJECT FOR SOME MONTHS, AND NOW BEFORE HIM IS THE FINAL SCRIPT.
HE DRINKS IT ALL IN. THEN HE GOES TO WORK...
SOON, VERY SOON, THESE TWO MEN FROM TWO DIFFERENT LANDS WILL UNVEIL A COMIC LIKE NO OTHER. A COMIC THAT MIGHT BE ABOUT YOU OR ME.
ESPERS
(C) 1985, James D. Hudnall
ESPERS... WHAT POWERS ARE REALLY ABOUT.
ECLIPSE COMICS